



# Thea Stilton

## THE TREASURE OF THE SEA



 SCHOLASTIC



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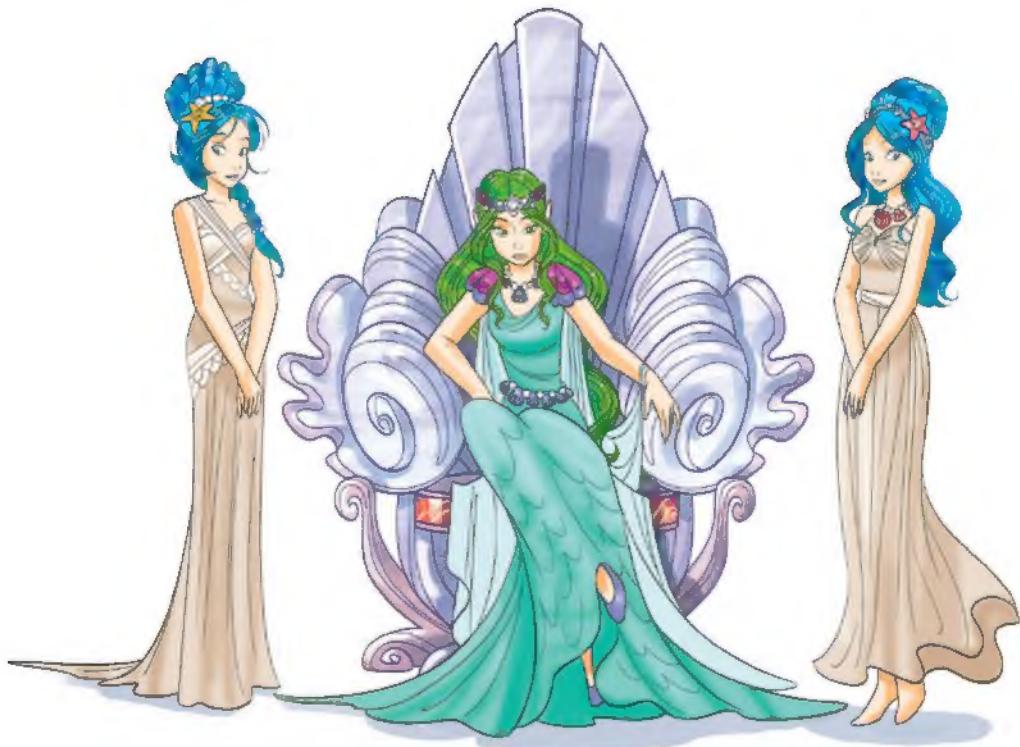
SCHOLASTIC



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# Thea Stilton and the Thea Sisters



THEA PAULINA Colette



Violet

Nicky

PAMELA

# The World of Aquamarina

Welcome to Aquamarina, the fantastic Land of the Sea! There are many beautiful, mysterious creatures in this truly special world. Come with us to find out who they are . . .



**Queen Anemone** lives in Pink Pearl Castle and rules her people with wisdom. She is the only creature in Aquamarina who can play the Sea Violin, a precious instrument that creates the magic that keeps the realm alive.

**The Starry Soldiers** protect the Pink Pearl Castle. These purple octopuses are grouchy, but are also brave and loyal.



**The Fairies of the Deep** are shy fairies who are healing experts. They are the custodians of the castle's Healing Room, which holds many cures and remedies.

*The Eel of Ages* is a mysterious, suspicious creature who lives in a remote part of the kingdom. She guards the Blue Pearl, which can answer any question asked of it.



*The Sea Nymphs* live in a beautiful village filled with blooming gardens and pretty houses decorated with seashells. They are also wonderful cooks.

*Captain Aragosa* is the leader of the Black Claw Crew, a group of fierce pirate crustaceans who sail the seas on their ship, the *Claw of the Deep*.



*The Cobalt Hermit Crab* is a great collector of seashells who lives at the Moving Dune. He has rude manners, but there's something very mysterious about him.

*Esmeralda* is the beautiful queen of the sirens. Her enchanting song can put anyone who hears it under her spell.



*Prince Nautilus* had promised his heart to Queen Anemone. But just after he asked her to marry him, he disappeared.





# WELCOME BACK, FRIENDS!

It was the end of **summer**, and five students gathered in a dorm room at Mouseford Academy. These mice called themselves the **THEA SISTERS**, after me, Thea Stilton. The six of us had gone on many **adventures** together.

On this afternoon, they were in Pam and Colette's room, talking about their summer **VACATIONS**. Pam was playing **MUSIC** on her laptop.

“Isn’t this great?” she asked, turning down the sound. “I can’t believe my brother Vince and I saw the **Cheddar Brothers Band** in Central Park. We don’t get together much, but I love



seeing him when I go back to **New York!**"

"What about you, Nicky?" asked Violet.  
"Did you have a good vacation?"

"It was really fun! I love going home to **AUSTRALIA**," the auburn-haired mouse replied. "I hiked and **CAMPED** for two weeks, sleeping out in the fresh air."

Colette looked shocked. "What, no **electricity**? How did you dry your fur?"

The Thea Sisters burst out **laughing**. They were all so different from one another, but that's why they were such good friends.

*More than friends, actually . . . sisters!*

"The Australian wind is better than any **FUR DRYER**," Nicky replied. Then she held up her tablet to show a **PHOTO** of the Australian Outback. "Isn't it gorgeous?"

**"Holey cheese!** Next time I'm going with you!" cried Pam.





Nicky swiped to the next photo. “Check out this **sunrise**.”

“Such beautiful **colors**,” Violet said dreamily.

She looked up at the ceiling, where the Thea Sisters had painted a sky full of **pink clouds** after their return from our last magical adventure in the Land of Clouds.

The others followed her gaze, remembering that special world where **beautiful fairies** skillfully weave the clouds.

“It seems like it’s been so long since our last mission for the **SEVEN ROSES UNIT**,” Violet said.

“I wonder what other **FANTASY WORLDS** there are for us to explore?” Colette asked.

“I’m sure **Will Mystery** will contact us if he needs us,” said Paulina, a little sadly.

Colette knew that Paulina and Will had a

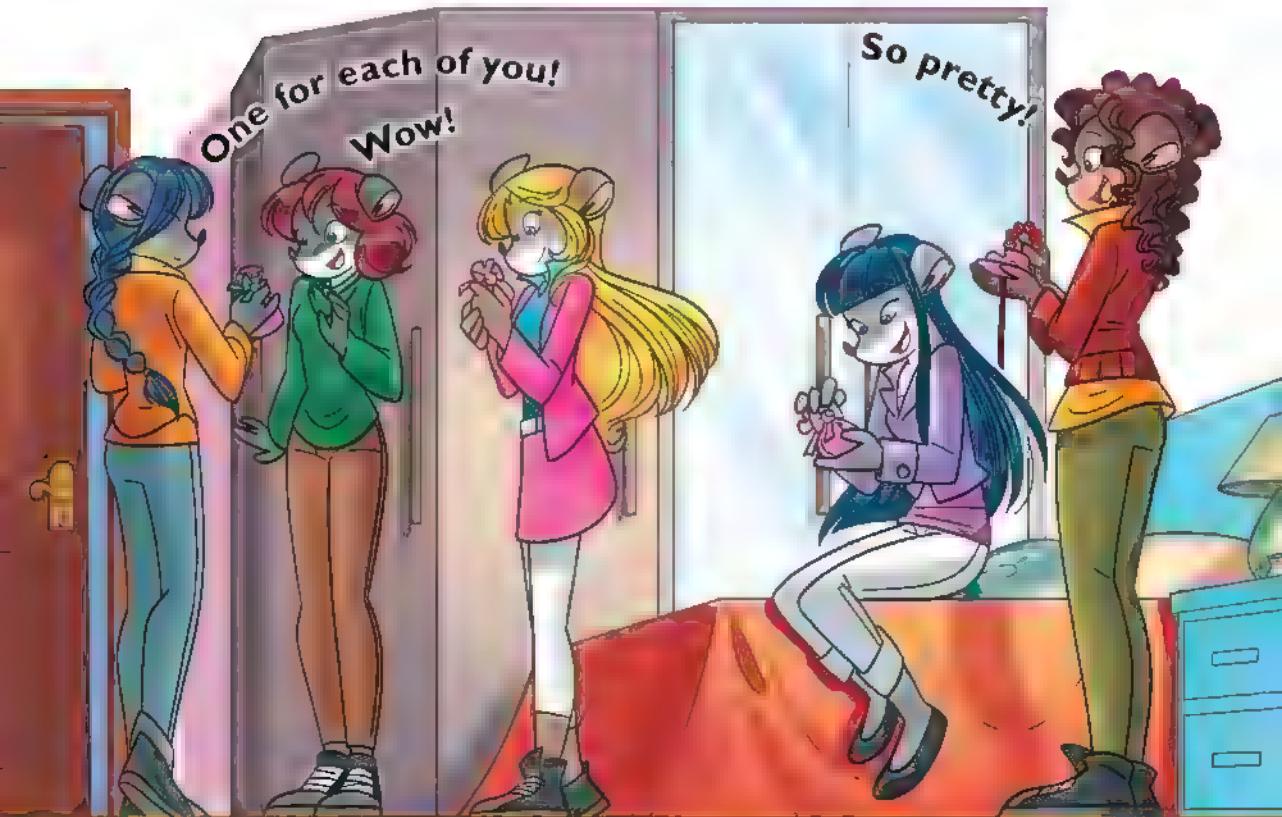


**special** connection, and that her friend must be missing him.

“How was your visit home to **PERU**, Paulina?” Colette asked, hoping to distract her.

“**Fantastic!**” she cried, brightening up. “Actually, I almost forgot. I have **presents** for all of you.”

She handed a **pink cotton pouch** to





each of her friends. “My little sister, Maria, made these for you.”

Colette untied her pouch first and took out a beautiful **beaded bracelet**.

“Ooh, how pretty!” she said, putting it on her wrist. “I **love** it.”

Pam showed off her **RED** bracelet. “Mine’s awesome, too!”



Violet’s was **PURPLE** and Nicky’s was **GREEN**. And Maria had made one for Paulina in her sister’s favorite color — **ORANGE**.

“Your little sister is such a **sweetheart**,” said Nicky. “I hope she can come to visit us again soon.”

“She even made one for **THEA**,” Paulina said, holding up one more pouch.

“Speaking of Thea, it’s **strange** that we



haven't seen her yet, isn't it?" remarked Nicky. "She came to **MOUSEFORD** yesterday for the journalism seminar."

"She must be very **busy**," Paulina guessed. "She usually has a lot to do to get ready for the seminar."

"Still, I hope we see her soon," said **Colette**. "Something **exciting** always happens when Thea **comes** to visit."

Just then, I tapped on the **HALF-OPEN DOOR**.

"Excuse me. May I come in?" I asked.

I knew I had a **worried expression** on my face, but I couldn't help it. Soon the Thea Sisters would find out why.





## A NEW mission

“Thea! We were just talking about you!” Colette said, **running** to hug me.

I was **happy** to see my friends after a long vacation. But I had just spoken to **Will Mystery**, the director of the Seven Roses Unit, and I couldn’t get his words out of my head.

“You seem **worried**, Thea,” Violet said. “Is everything all right?”

“Actually, I’m not sure,” I replied. “**NEWS FROM WILL?**” Paulina asked.

I nodded. Nicky quickly closed the door. Any communication about the Seven Roses Unit had to remain a **SECRET**.

“I received a **mysterious** phone call from Will,” I began.



“What did he say?” Nicky asked.

“He couldn’t tell me much, because he’s still doing research,” I explained. “But there’s a **problem** on the Living Map. It looks like another **FANTASY WORLD** is in danger.”

“Does he need our help?” asked Pam, eager to begin a **NEW MISSION**.

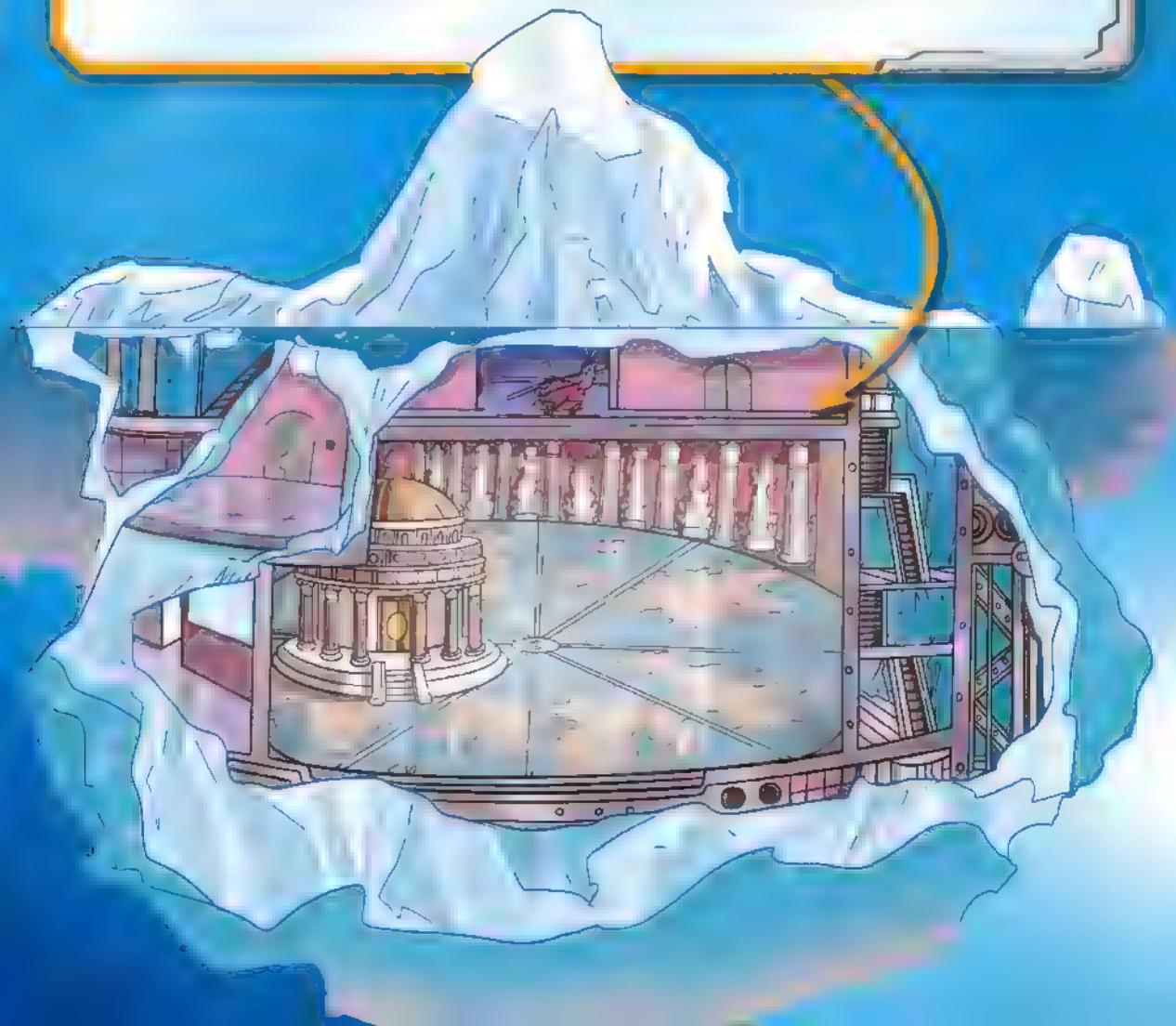


# **THE SEVEN ROSES UNIT**

The Seven Roses Unit is a supersecret research center that studies fantasy worlds. These lands contain characters from legends and fables.

## **LIVING MAP**

Inside the Hall of the Seven Roses is a Living Map that depicts the fantasy worlds. It shows the condition of each world and can signal danger.





**CRYSTAL PENDANTS**  
Anyone wishing to enter any room in the unit must wear their special rose-shaped crystal pendant. It contains their personal information and clearance levels.



### CRYSTAL ELEVATOR

This elevator made of crystal is a portal that can take passengers to the fantasy worlds. It is activated by playing a keyboard, and only Will Mystery knows the tune that will make it work.





“He does,” I answered. “He asked us to join him as **soon** as possible at the headquarters of the Seven Roses Unit.”

“Hooray!” cheered the Thea Sisters.

Normally I applaud the **enthusiasm** of these young rodents, but they were forgetting to be **careful**.

“Not so loud,” I reminded them. “Someone will hear us.”

“**Sorry**, Thea,” Nicky apologized. “We got carried away.”

“When are we leaving?” Colette asked.

I looked out the window. It was almost **Sunset**.

“Will is sending a





helicopter for us at six tomorrow morning,” I told them. “That way we can leave without drawing too much **ATTENTION.**”

“Perfect, Thea!” said Pam. “We’ll be **right on time.** I’ll make sure Colette wakes up extra early to get her packing done.”

“I should be insulted, but I know **you’re right!**” Colette said with a laugh.

“Good,” I said. “Just remember to keep this mission a **SECRET.**”

“**We will!**” the five friends promised. I turned to leave, but Paulina stopped me. “Thea, wait,” she said, holding out a **fabric pouch.** “This is for you. My sister made one for each of us.”

“Thank you,” I said, and opened the pouch to find a **beautiful** bracelet with beads in



every color of the **rainbow**. “I love it!”

I went back to my office and checked for any **messages** from Will — but there were none. I frowned. Will had sounded so **SERIOUS** on the phone. I hoped that we wouldn’t be **too late** to save the fantasy world in danger.

Since I didn’t know where we were going, I only packed my **BACKPACK** with necessities: my tablet, my laptop, a flashlight, and a notebook and pen. If any **special clothing** was required, I was sure Will would have us covered.

Then I tried to get some sleep. The next day would be a long one.

**IT WAS THE  
BEGINNING OF A  
NEW ADVENTURE!**



# SUPERSONIC TRAVEL

The next morning, I woke up before sunrise. I felt **wide awake**. I couldn't wait to get to the Seven Roses Unit!

I **quickly** made my way through the empty hallways of Mouseford Academy, then crossed the garden and headed for the **heliport** by the shore.

The Thea Sisters were already there and waiting for me. I could see they were just as **excited** as I was to start our new adventure!

Pam pointed to the sky. “**Look, it's coming!**”

We could see the **red** helicopter flying across the **blue** sky.

The **helicopter** landed on the field in

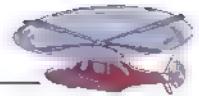


## SUPersonic TRAVEL

front of us. The **special agent** at the controls motioned for us to get on board.

We quickly boarded and fastened our seat belts. The pilot handed each of us a headset with a **CRYSTAL** visor.





“Wear these, please,” he instructed. “They’re a **prototype** of a new communication device.”

“What kind of communication?” Nicky asked, but before he could answer each visor projected a **HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE** of Will Mystery!

“Hello, Thea!” he said. “Hello, Paulina, Pam, Nicky, Violet, and Colette!”

We all greeted him.

“It’s quite a **SURPRISE** to see you like this,” I said.

“I thought this helicopter ride would be a good **test** for the new headsets,” he said.

“What do you think?”

“You **Sound** great!” said Colette.

“And you **LOOK** great,





Hey there!



too!” Paulina said.

Then she blushed.

“You know what I mean. We can **SEE YOU** well.”

Will smiled. “Good to know! Have a nice trip.

I’ll be here waiting for you.”

His image **VANISHED**, leaving us with a thousand questions about the mission ahead. But those answers would have to wait. We settled in as the helicopter flew toward **ICY ANTARCTICA** at supersonic speed.



## AN EVENTFUL ARRIVAL

The state-of-the-art helicopter swiftly and silently carried us to the headquarters of the **SEVEN ROSES UNIT**.

Shortly after Will signed off, we spotted the tip of a **HUGE ICEBERG** on the horizon, where the secret entrance to headquarters was located. The pilot was preparing to land when a **GUST OF WIND** jolted the helicopter.

“What’s happening?” Violet cried.

Then a **SECOND GUST OF WIND** shook the aircraft. This time, the pilot was ready for it and kept the helicopter as **STEADY** as he could.

“There’s a **freezing** current colliding

with a **warm** one," he replied through the headset. "Just hold tight and stay calm."

The pilot began the **descent**, slowly circling the iceberg. With each **spiral**, the helicopter flew lower and lower. We were **hovering** just above the ice when he pushed a button on the control panel. The **ICEBERG** split in two, and the pilot guided the aircraft down into the crevice.

We **slowly** moved down through a large **tunnel** of ice.

Paulina gazed out the window. "Each time we do this, I'm **amazed**," she said.



“I know,” agreed Colette. “Just think: We’re heading into the **depths** of the ocean!”

The helicopter came to a stop on the arrival platform. Will was standing there waiting for us.

“**Welcome!**” he greeted us. “How was your trip?”

“Well, we did experience some **turbulence** up there,” Violet said, shivering at the memory.

“But the pilot handled it very well,” added Nicky.

“I don’t doubt it,” Will said, and he **saluted** the special agent in the cockpit. Then he turned to me and the Thea Sisters.

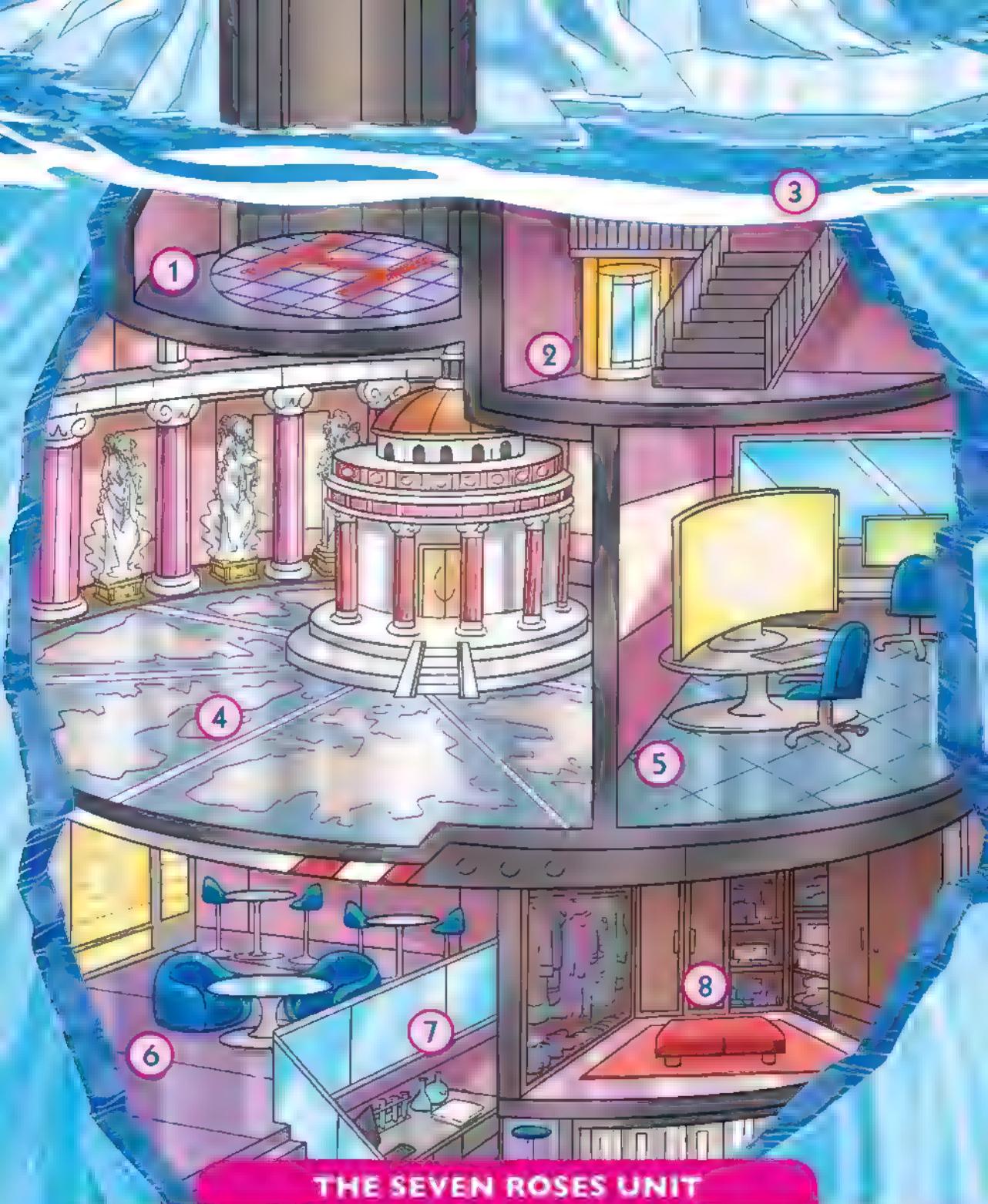
*Let's get to work!*



“You’re probably **wondering** why I called you here so quickly,” he said. “As Thea has told you, I have reason to believe that one of the **FANTASY WORLDS** is in trouble. There is a disturbance on the Living Map.”

“Which **world** are you talking about?” I asked anxiously. So far, we had met all kinds of **fairies** and ~~magical~~ creatures — everything from fairies of Japanese legends to a **PRINCE** from the lost city of Atlantis.

“Follow me to the Hall of the Seven Roses, and I’ll explain everything,” he replied. “But we must **hurry!**”



### THE SEVEN ROSES UNIT

1. Landing platform
2. Interior elevator
3. Access to the iceberg
4. Hall of the Seven Roses

5. Supercomputer station
6. Break room
7. Research laboratory
8. Wardrobe storage room



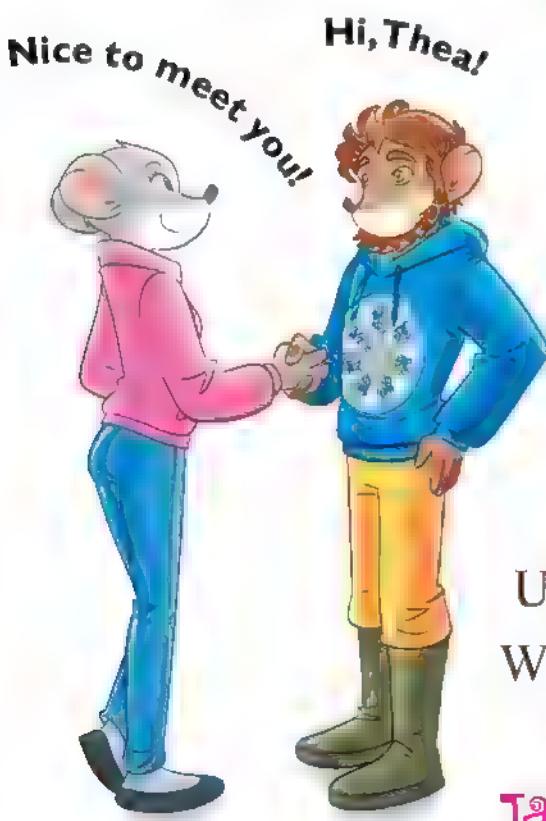
# A DIFFICULT CASE

We followed Will to the **HALL OF THE SEVEN ROSES**, where we were surprised to find another **special agent** waiting for us. He was a **BLUE-EYED**, bearded

rodent. The color of his hoodie matched his eyes, and on the front was the **symbol** of the Seven Roses, also in blue.

“This is **JACK**, who is in charge of the Undersea Research Lab,” Will said.

“**Nice to meet you, Jack**,” I said, shaking his





paw. “I’m Thea Stilton, and these are my students, Paulina, Pam, Nicky, Colette, and Violet.”

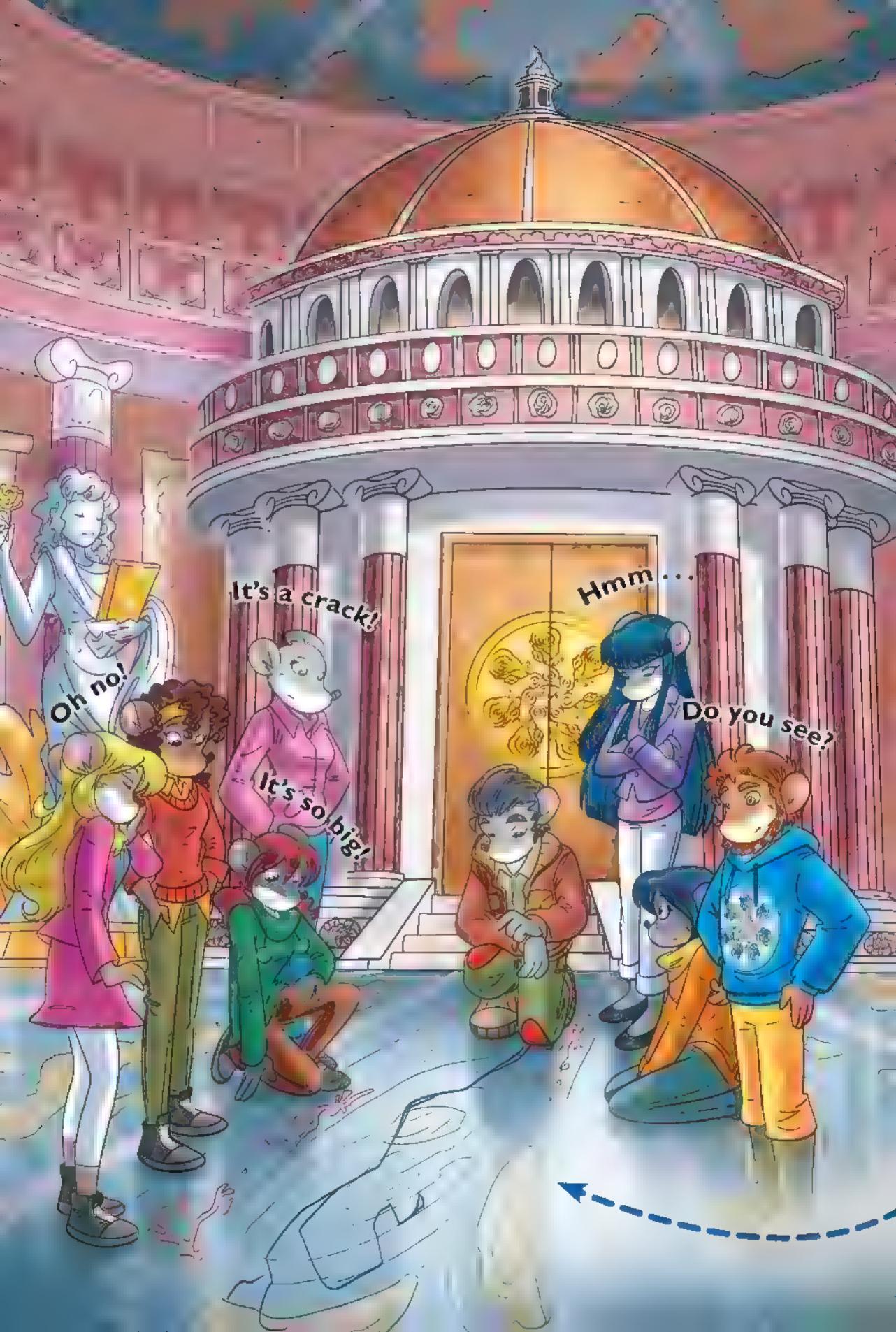
“I didn’t know that the unit had an **Undersea Research Lab**,” Paulina said.

Will nodded. “We called in Jack because there is **something wrong** in one of our undersea worlds.”

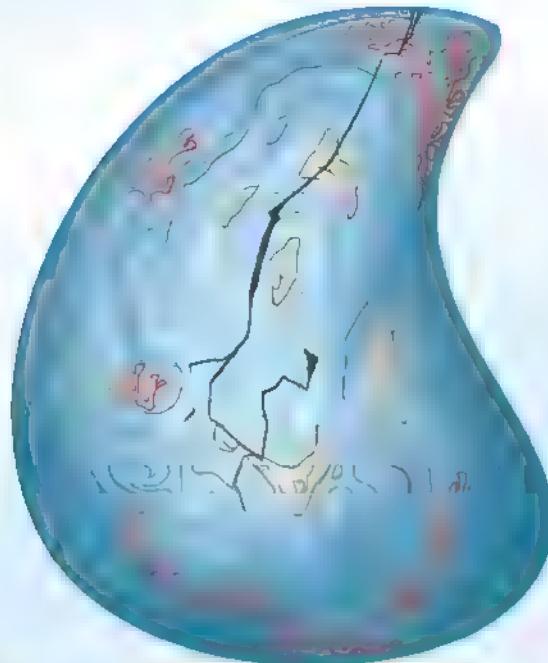
The mouselets and I exchanged **worried** looks.

“Take a look at the **Living Map** and you’ll understand,” Will continued, and we followed him once more.

The huge map was **ETCHED** all across the floor of the hall. Will stopped at a part of the map showing **SWIRLS** and water currents. A large **CRACK** ran through the area, which bore the name . . .



# Aquamarina, the Land of the Sea



“Aquamarina,” read Colette.

“What a lovely name,” said Violet.

“It’s a ~~magical world~~, from what we know,” added Jack. “There are **creatures** there that can’t be found anywhere else.”

“We must find out what caused this **CRACK**, and save the realm,” Will concluded.



“Do you have any idea what the **problem** might be?” asked Paulina.

Jack nodded. “We have discovered something: We can no longer hear the **Music of the Sea**. It is the magic that powers everything in Aquamarina.”

“Without it, the land will **not exist** much longer,” Will said sadly.

“Ever since the music stopped, the fish have been losing their **BEAUTIFUL COLORS**,” Jack continued. “Soon they may disappear altogether.”

“How sad!” said Violet.

“It would be **very sad** to lose this land and all of the wonders in it,” Will agreed. “Which is why we must travel there and find out why the **music** has stopped.”

“You know you can count on us,” I assured him.



“Yes, you can!”  
echoed the Thea Sisters.

“Thank you,” Will said. “Here’s the **PLAN**. Jack will remain here at headquarters and follow us via computer. We’ll be using a new GPS system to orient ourselves. Once we’re back, he can download our data and archive all the information we’ve **discovered**.”

He held up the GPS, a small black box with a screen. “This **new version** has a sensitive data collection system, and it can store an **ENORMOUSE** amount of data besides.”

“I’m **EXCITED** to see you test it out,” said Jack. “Right now we only have a limited amount of information about Aquamarina in our system.”



“I’m **curious**,” said Paulina. “How will we get around in an underwater world? A **SUBMARINE**?”

“Or with diving gear?” I asked. “We may need to bring **reserve tanks** of oxygen.”

Will smiled. “Don’t worry, Thea. We won’t need oxygen.”

**“Are you sure?  
How can that be?”**

I asked, surprised.

“Like all **fantasy** worlds, Aquamarina has a **magical** environment,” he explained. “Once we’re within its borders, we will be able to **breathe**





normally, just like we do here.”

“We’ll be just like **fish**!” said Violet.

“Speaking of fish, are we going to **EAT** before we leave?” asked Pam. “I’m so **hungry** I could eat a peanut-butter-and-jellyfish sandwich!”

“Also, we really should check the **supercomputer** before we leave,” said Paulina. “Like we do before each mission.”

“I was just going to suggest that,” said Will. “Let’s go.”

We all headed to the supercomputer station, where we could read all the data gathered so far about

## Aquamarine.

# AQUAMARINA

**POPULATION:** Ocean fairies and aquatic creatures

**LEGEND:** According to legend, the ocean fairies produce sweet music, the ***Music of the Sea***, which grants good health and harmony to all of the realm's creatures, and keeps the magical land alive.



**RULER:** Queen Anemone, a fairy of great beauty and courage, rules Aquamarina and keeps harmony in the realm with the help of the fairies of her court. They are the **CLEARWATER FAIRIES; FAIRIES OF THE COLD SEA; FAIRIES OF THE WARM SEA; WATER CURRENT FAIRIES; and FAIRIES OF THE DEEP.**

**HOW TO REACH AQUAMARINA:** The entrance is located in the mysterious **TURQUOISE GROTTO**. To enter, you must hold your breath and close your eyes.



**PINK PEARL CASTLE:** The marvelous dwelling of the fairies is located in the middle of Placid Lagoon. It is defended by a **CORAL WALL** made of stinging coral that closes off the castle when unexpected guests arrive.

**HOW TO REACH THE CASTLE:**



Follow the **DIAMOND CURRENT**, lit by the shimmering reflections around it.





## SUIT UP!

I carefully studied the data about the **ocean fairies** provided by the supercomputer. Will had told us that we wouldn't need oxygen to **breathe** underwater, but I still had some **questions** for him.

“It says that the **Pink Pearl Castle** is guarded by a stinging coral barrier,” I told Will. “It sounds like we will need to wear some **protective clothing**. Maybe a wet suit?”

Will nodded. “Certainly, Thea. A wet suit will provide protection from the stinging coral of the **coral wall**, and also from cold currents and other dangers that we might encounter in **Aquamarina**.”

“Do you have **wet suits** for us?” asked Paulina.



“Not just any wet suits,” Will replied. “Ever since the crack in Aquamarina appeared, our lab has been working on creating **special** wet suits using the latest **technology**.”

“Cool! Can we see them?” Pam asked.

“Follow me,” Will said, and he led us down another hallway to a large **STEEL DOOR**.

To enter, Will lined up his right eye with a sensor next to the door, and then tapped in a code on a keyboard. The door slid open.

**We were squeakless!**





Inside the room were six large glass display cases. Each case contained a sleek white wet suit with **colorful trim**.

“These might be **protective**, but they look like **high fashion** to me,” Colette said.

Jack grinned. “That’s just a plus. Each one is made of a specially engineered material that will keep you **warm** in cold water. And each suit contains a **camera** and **computer chip**, so you’ll be able to collect data wherever you go.”

I smiled at Will. “You’ve thought of everything!”

“They’re all ready for you,” he replied. “To get them, you each just need to take your rose-shaped **CRYSTAL PENDANT** and place it up against the display case sensor. Push the **red button**, and the







display case will open.”

“Okay, we’re ready!” the Thea Sisters responded.

Will gave us each our pink crystal pendants, which contained our **personal information** and gave us access to the most **SECRET** places in the Seven Roses Unit. Then he and Jack left the room.

For a moment, we all **STARED** at the cases that contained the wet suits.

“Did you notice that each one has a **different color** trim?” Colette asked.

“We should each pick our favorite color,” Nicky suggested. “Colette, I know you’re choosing the **FUCHSIA**.”

“Of course!” Colette cried.

“I’d like the **PURPLE**, please,” said Violet.

Pam chose **RED**, Nicky chose **GREEN**, and Paulina chose **ORANGE**.



I walked to the case with the **blue wet suit**, placed my pendant in front of the sensor, and pressed the **red button**. The case sprang open! The others did the same, and soon we each held our wet suit.





# THE TURQUOISE GROTTO

We put on our **special wet suits** and then joined Will and Jack outside the room.

“Let’s get to the **crystal elevator**,” Will said, hurrying down the hall. “It will take us to a place called the **Turquoise Grotto**. It’s the passageway to Aquamarina.”

“A grotto is a cave, right?” asked Nicky. “There’s a **beautiful** one back home in Australia, right on the **beach**.”

“I think you’ll find that this one is beautiful, too,” Will promised.

When we boarded the crystal elevator, Jack **waved** to us as the door closed.

“**Safe travels!**” he called out.

Then we heard music in the **elevator**,



and it sped toward our destination.

“This music is so **relaxing** . . . almost like a **lullaby**,” remarked Violet.

“It’s inspired by the

**Music of the Sea,**”

Will told us.

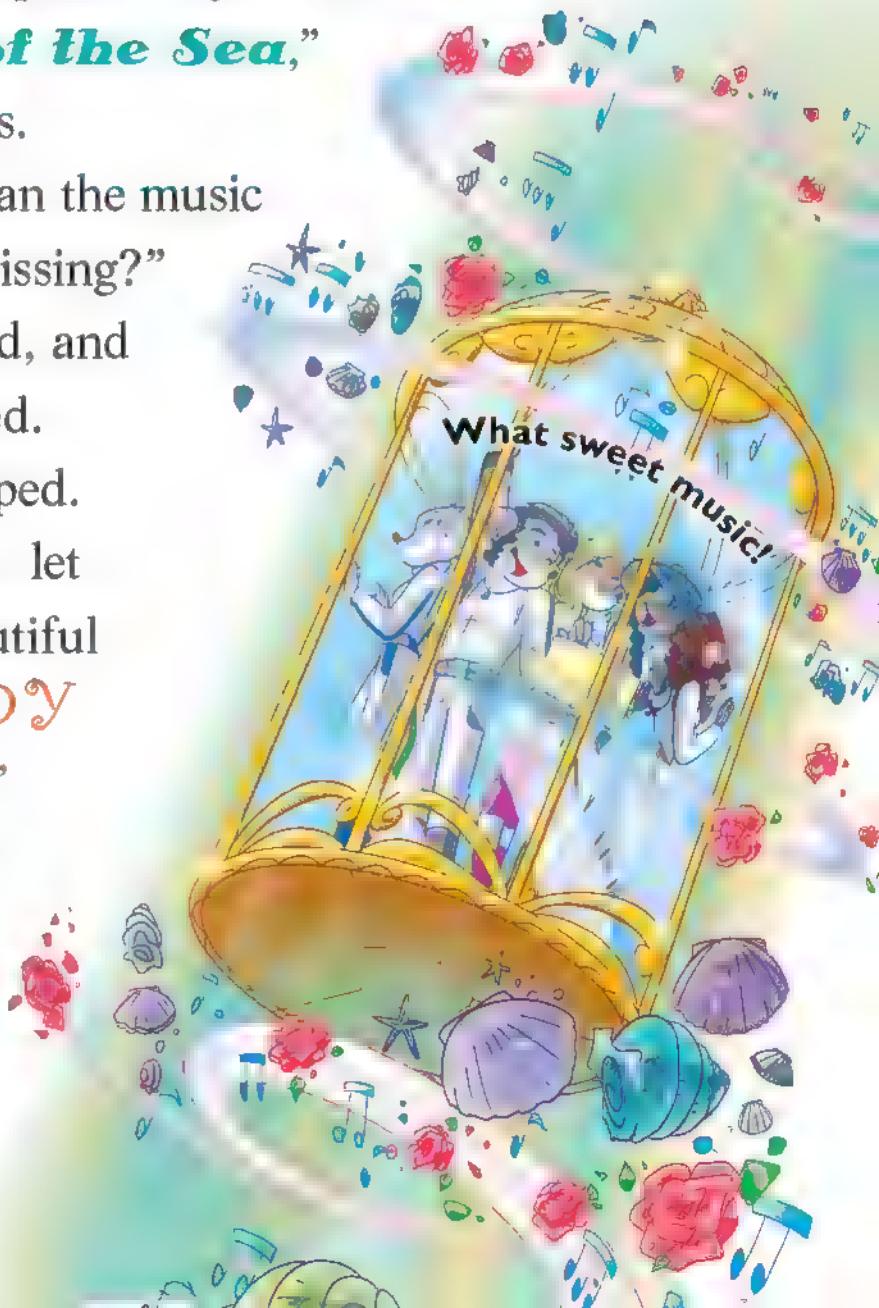
“You mean the music that is missing?”

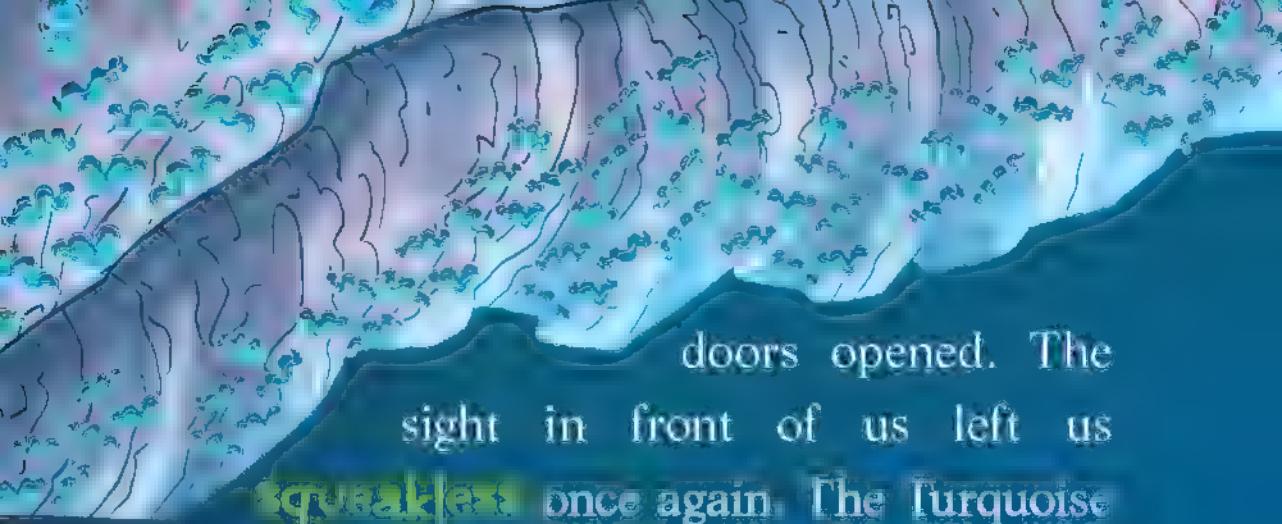
Nicky asked, and Will nodded.

Pam gasped.

“We can’t let such a beautiful **MELODY** disappear!”

Soon the elevator stopped, and the





doors opened. The sight in front of us left us **speechless** once again. The Turquoise Grotto was a **CAVE** with a high ceiling. The walls above us **sparkled** with a magical **BLUE SPARKLE** that reflected on the surface of the water.





Colette gazed up at the ceiling. "Those **SPARKLY** things look like pearls!"

"They look like animals to me," Nicky observed.

"They're mollusks," Will explained. "They eat blue plankton that **glows in the dark**, and it turns them blue."

"I hope I remember this, so I can **paint** it," Violet said.

"How do we get to Aquamarina from here?" Paulina asked.

Will pointed to the water. "We have to dive down, and then follow the **lighthouse**."





## THE TURQUOISE GROTTO

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We leaned forward and saw something **glowing** beneath the surface of the water.

"We have to **swim** down there?" Colette asked.

"Yes, there's a **tunnel** in the rock, beneath the **waterline**, that leads to Aquamarina," Will replied. "Hold your breath until we reach the tunnel. Then we'll





be able to **breathe** freely. I'll go first — follow me."

We each **held our breath** and dove in, one after another, trusting that what we knew about this **magical** place was correct.

We swam through a **ROCKY TUNNEL** — and then the **Secret world** of Aquamarina appeared before our eyes.



# WELCOME TO AQUAMARINA!

“Are we all here? Is everyone okay?” Will asked as soon as we exited the **tunnel**.

“Yes, all okay, thanks,” we replied.

Colette looked surprised. “Hey, we can **talk** underwater!”

“It’s part of the magic of Aquamarina,” Will said.

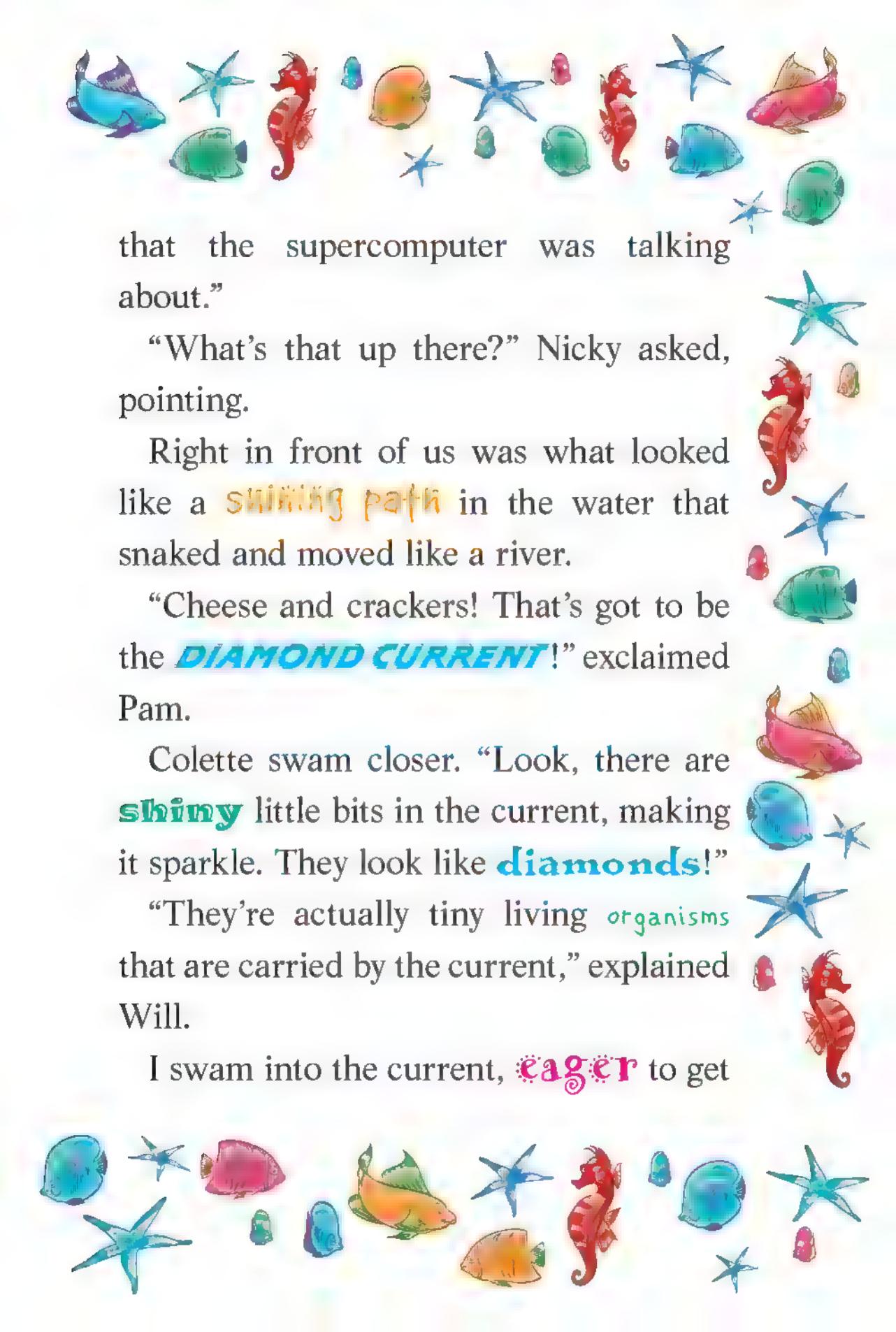
**“FAINTASY WORLDS**  
are truly unique places,” I added.

Paulina looked around.  
“Now we have to find the

**DIAMOND CURRENT**

*We can talk!*





that the supercomputer was talking about."

"What's that up there?" Nicky asked, pointing.

Right in front of us was what looked like a **shimmering path** in the water that snaked and moved like a river.

"Cheese and crackers! That's got to be the **DIAMOND CURRENT!**" exclaimed Pam.

Colette swam closer. "Look, there are **shiny** little bits in the current, making it sparkle. They look like **diamonds!**"

"They're actually tiny living **organisms** that are carried by the current," explained Will.

I swam into the current, **eager** to get



There's so  
much to see!

Hi!

Hee, hee!

*It's all so beautiful!*



*Let's go!*





to the Pink Pearl Castle. The others followed me. As we headed along the **sparkly path**, we observed the **wonders** of Aquamarina.

“There are plants and creatures of all **SHAPES** and **COLORS** here!” Colette gushed.

Suddenly, Nicky cried out, “Look over there, at those fish! The color has started to **FADE** from their scales.”

“It’s happening to the **tentacles** of this anemone, too,” said Paulina, pointing to a creature in front of her.

Will frowned.

“THE SITUATION IS EVEN MORE SERIOUS





THAN WE THOUGHT,” he said. “So many creatures are **LOSING** their colors!”

“Without the **Music of the Sea**, the magic of this land is fading,” I said. “We must find out what happened, and we must do it **SOON** . . . or this enchanted world will be erased **FOREVER!**”

We swam **FASTER**, continuing to follow the Diamond Current.

Then, in the distance, we spotted an **enormous underwater plant**.

“That looks like bushes made of **seaweed** **swallow!**” Pam remarked.

**CURIOUS**, we moved closer . . .

# THE GIANT STICKY SPONGE

“I don’t think it’s cotton candy. It looks like a **GIANT SEA SPONGE**,” Paulina said.

“It’s too *pretty* to be a sponge,” Colette said, swimming closer. “It looks like lovely *ruffled* fabric!”

“Don’t get too close, Colette,” Will warned. “We don’t know what it is, and it could be **DANGEROUS** to us.”

“How could something so beautiful be dangerous?” Colette asked. “See? There are **glittering specks** all throughout it.”

Paulina swam up to her and tried to pull her back. “Colette, we have to be careful.”

“I will — but I have to get a **CLOSER** look,” Colette said. “Who knows when I’ll see anything like this again?”

She swam right up to the sponge. We watched **anxiously** as she examined the strange plant.

“**It looks so soft,**” she said. “I would love to make a dress out of this!”

She **REACHED OUT** with one of her paws to touch it.

Suddenly, a thick **yellow foam** sprayed out of the sponge. It stuck to Colette’s paws!

Will immediately swam





over to her, but the foam had already spread, **surrounding** poor Colette.

### **"THE FOAM IS GROWING BIGGER!"**

Nicky shouted with alarm.

"Quick! Let's help her!" Paulina cried, and Pam, Nicky, and I swam over to Will. Paulina and Violet hung back, **frightened**.

"It's like the sponge is trying to **TRAP** Colette," Paulina remarked.

"She'll be a prisoner down here **forever!**" wailed Violet.

"Stay calm," Will advised them. "Her special wet suit will **PROTECT** her for a while. But we have to try to get her loose."

The **foam** was spreading out even farther now, trying to reach me and the others.



Careful, Colette!

Get back!

Oh no!



# "HELP! HELP ME!"

Colette shouted, struggling to free herself from her sticky, wet prison.

"Colette, **DON'T MOVE**," Will warned. "The more you move, the faster the foam will grow. Hang on and we'll try to free you."

He reached out his arm to grab her, but a **cloud of foam** stopped him.

"Will! Look out!" I yelled.

I instinctively moved toward him to help, but the **STICKY FOAM** quickly surrounded me.

**NOW I WAS TRAPPED, TOO!**



## PURPLE INK TO THE RESCUE

The **GIANT SPONGE** had imprisoned us in its foamy trap! After me, Nicky and Pam got **STUCK**.

Even though Will had warned us not to **move**, we tried to pull ourselves away from the foam. But **more and more** foam kept coming. Soon it would reach Paulina and Violet, who had stayed behind us.

And if that wasn't enough, I could no longer see the **DIAMOND CURRENT**, which was our only hope of finding Pink Pearl Castle!

“**THEA, GIVE ME YOUR PAW!**” Will called out, reaching for me.

I saw that he had managed to grab Colette’s



paw before the foam had completely surrounded her.

I yanked one arm out of the foam and reached, **stretching** with all my might. I found Will's paw, and that gave me **COURAGE**. So I reached out and grabbed Nicky's paw, and she reached for Violet.

*We were safe — but for how long?*

“The foam is **PULLING** me in!” Colette





cried. "I can't hold on!"

Then I heard Nicky shout. "**Thea, look!**" A strange, **DARK SUBSTANCE** that looked like purple ink was heading toward us. The liquid **Floated** right to us and mixed with the **foam**.

"What is this stuff?" Colette asked.  
"I don't know, but it's **attacking** the sticky foam!" Will replied.





It was true. The purple liquid was **MELTING** the foam on contact!

**“Holey cheese! We’re saved!”**  
Pam cheered.

As soon as we were free, we swam away from the sponges.

“This **PURPLE INK** is amazing,” Paulina said, studying the remnants on her wet suit. “It completely **dissolved** the foam!”

“But where **did** it come from?” Colette asked, looking around.

“Maybe from them!” Nicky said, pointing to two creatures swimming toward us. They looked like **purple octopuses**, and they each had **long arms**.

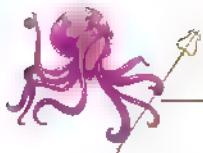
“They don’t seem very **friendly**,” Paulina observed.

She was right. The octopuses were **frowning** severely.



They swam right up to us.  
“Stay where you are, strangers!”  
one of them ordered in a commanding voice.  
“Let’s do as he says,” I told the others.  
“Even if we wanted to, we couldn’t **ESCAPE**.  
So we **STOPPED** in our tracks, waiting to  
see what these octopuses wanted with us.  
“Who are you? What are you doing in  
**Aquamarina**?” the first octopus asked.





“We’re here because we know that Aquamarina is in **SERIOUS DANGER**, and we want to help you,” Will replied.

The creatures shared a **curious** look. Then the one who was doing the talking continued.

“Do you have **permission** to enter our realm?” he asked.

“Well, you see —” Will started to explain, but the other octopus gave an **impatient** growl.

**“Seize them!”** he commanded.

The two octopuses reached out with their **long arms**. One of them lashed around Pam.





“**LET GO!**” she squeaked.

One by one their **LONG ARMS** wrapped around us.

“Who are you, and why are you doing this?” I asked.

“We’re the **STARRY SOLDIERS, THE GUARDIANS OF PINK PEARL CASTLE,**” replied the guard who had grabbed me. “We have orders to arrest all intruders.”

“We’re not **intruders!**” Paulina protested.

“We’ll see about that,” the octopus said. “Now come with us to the **Pink Pearl Castle.**”

Then it hit us: *That was exactly where we wanted to go!*

Will turned to the one who seemed to be in charge. “We won’t resist. You can let go of us.”



## PURPLE INK TO THE RESCUE

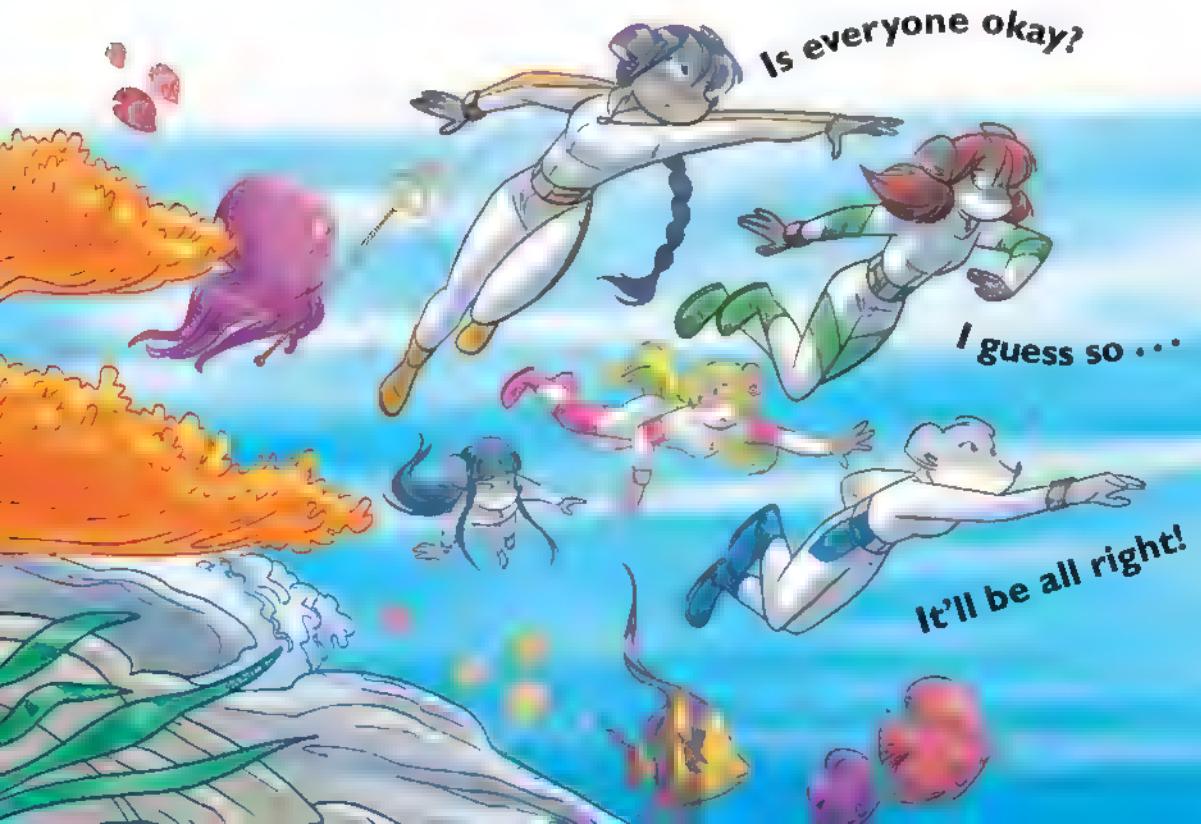
“Why should we **TRUST YOU?**” the leader asked.

“We give you our word,” Will promised.

The creature’s eyes narrowed. “Very well,” he said. “We will let go of you. But I’m warning you: **NO GAMES**, or you’ll be sorry!”

“That won’t happen,” Will said.

The Starry Soldiers released their arms and we **stretched**, glad to be free. Then



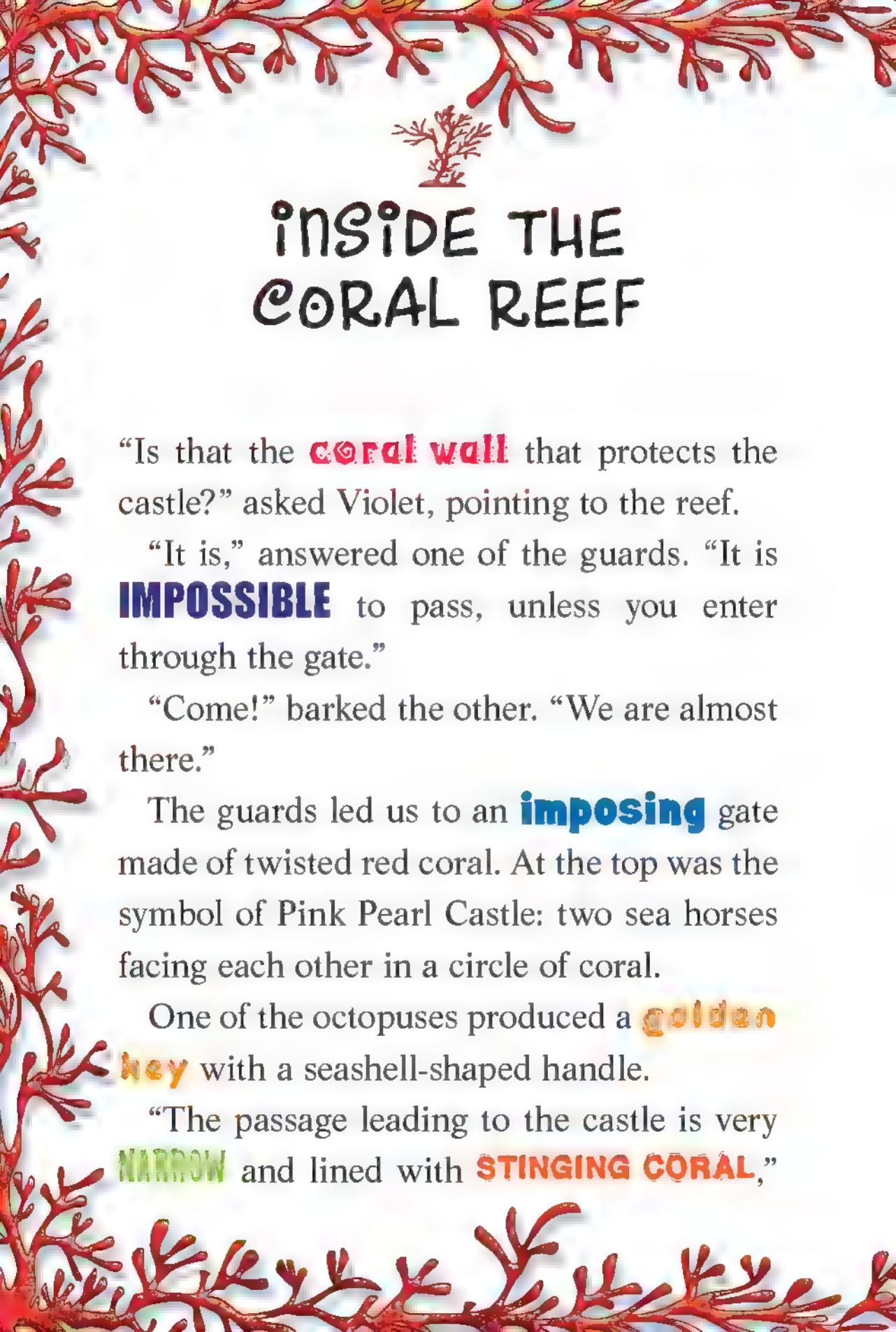


we swam with them across a sandbar, **algae patches**, and rocky boulders.

Any fish we passed moved aside in **FEAR** when they saw the octopuses. Soon, the guards slowed down, and we saw a **wondrous** sight in front of us.

A bright red **coral reef** stretched out across the bottom of the ocean floor, leading right to ... **THE MAJESTIC PINK PEARL CASTLE!**





# INSIDE THE CORAL REEF

“Is that the **coral wall** that protects the castle?” asked Violet, pointing to the reef.

“It is,” answered one of the guards. “It is **IMPOSSIBLE** to pass, unless you enter through the gate.”

“Come!” barked the other. “We are almost there.”

The guards led us to an **imposing** gate made of twisted red coral. At the top was the symbol of Pink Pearl Castle: two sea horses facing each other in a circle of coral.

One of the octopuses produced a **golden key** with a seashell-shaped handle.

“The passage leading to the castle is very **NARROW** and lined with **STINGING CORAL**,”

he said, turning to look at us. “All members of the queen’s court may pass through unharmed. But you must be very **CAREFUL.**”

“The coral **stings** are very painful,” added the other guard. “It can be deadly.”

“**DEADLY?**” asked Colette worriedly.

“Our wet suits should **protect** us,” Will said. “But they have never been tested with this stinging coral. Try to swim very **cautiously.**”

“Are you sure there isn’t **another** entrance?” asked Pam. “Like, maybe where the pizza delivery guy comes in?”

“This is the only way,” the guard said, his voice **deep** and **serious.**





Beware the  
stinging coral!

Look!

Pink Pearl!

Wow!

Oh!





“We’ll be all right,” I assured everyone.  
“Just be very careful.”

The guard unlocked the gate with the **key** and it swung open. The passageway really was narrow, and **SPIKES** of coral jutted out on either side.

The guard **swam** through, and I **swam** after him, followed by Colette, Nicky, Violet, Pam, Paulina, and Will. The other octopus closed out the line and the doors of the **coral gate** closed behind us with a quiet click.

Our octopus guide **effortlessly** swam between the protruding coral, but it was not so easy for us mice. The coral seemed to be reaching out for us with long, sharp, **THREATENING** branches.

“How’s everyone doing?” I asked, looking behind me.

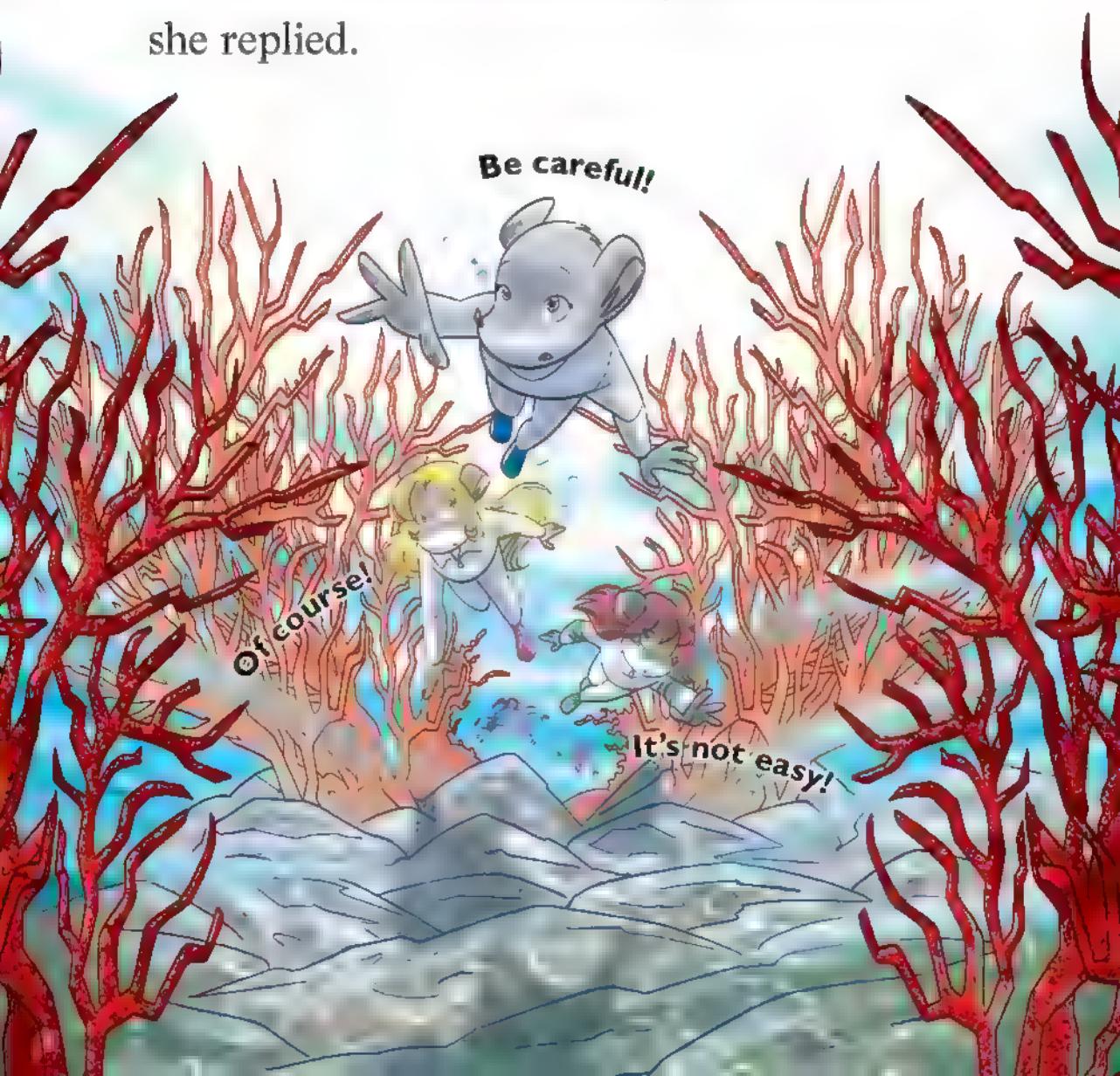


“Doing okay, Thea,” Colette replied. “But I can’t wait to get to the end of this!”

“And I’m doing — **WHOA!**” Pam cried.

“What’s wrong?” Will asked.

“I accidentally **brushed** against the coral,” she replied.





“Oh no, Pam! Are you okay?” Violet asked.  
“My wet suit protected me, but still, it felt pretty **sharp**,” Pam reported.

“Stay **focused**, everyone!” I warned.  
We swam farther through the passage.  
“I can feel a **STRONG CURRENT** coming up!” Will suddenly called out in warning.

Just as he said it, the current **pushed** against us. I steadied myself, but I looked behind me and saw the current slamming into Paulina! She **TUMBLED** right into a patch of **prickly coral**.

“Ow!” she yelled.  
Will was the closest to her, and he **immediately** swam to her side. He pulled her away from the coral, but her eyes were **closed** and her body was limp. He held her in his arms.

“Look!” Violet cried. “Her wet suit has been **TORN** by the coral!”

The octopus behind Will swam up to him and **frowned**.

“What’s happened to her?” Will asked.

“She was **STUNG** by the coral,” replied the guard. “Those who are stung fall into a **deep sleep**.”

“Oh no!” cried Colette.

“How do we **wake her** up?” Nicky asked.

“We must bring her to the **castle**,” said the octopus. “She can be **healed** there.”

I looked at Paulina’s still face. The poor mouselet was not moving at all.

“**LET’S HURRY!**” I urged.



The lead octopus guided us through the last **NARROW STRETCH** of the coral tunnel. We swam into the warm, calm water of the **Placid Lagoon**.

The castle was right in front of us. Will **HURRIED** toward the entrance, still carrying Paulina.

“I hope the **fairies** can help Paulina!” said Colette, holding back tears.



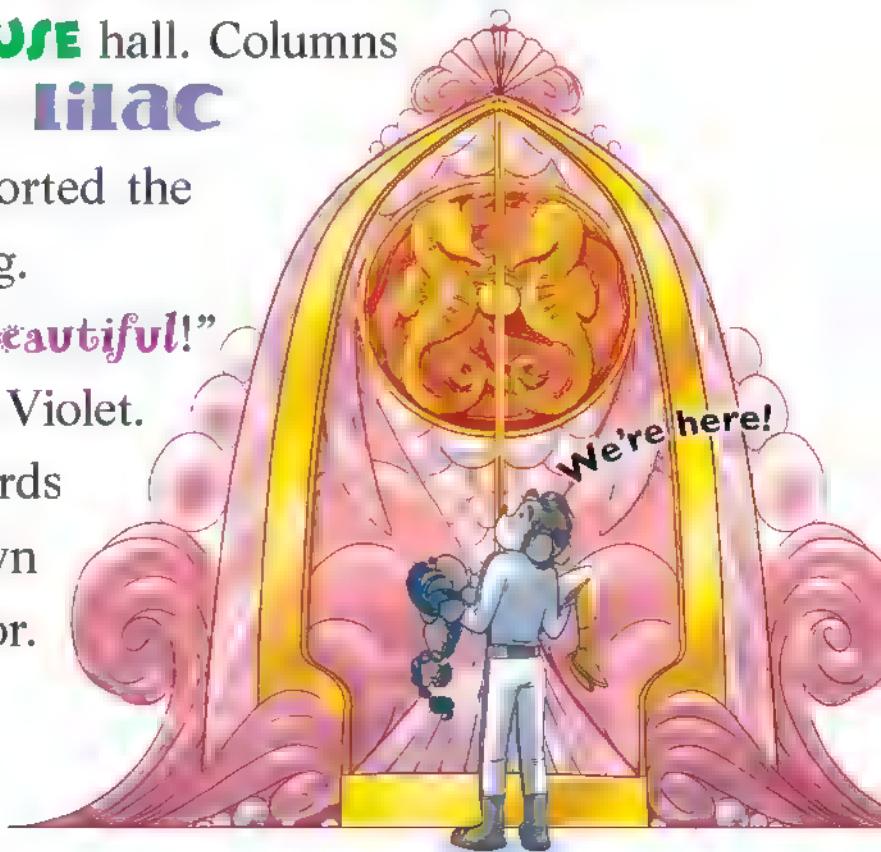
# AT PINK PEARL CASTLE

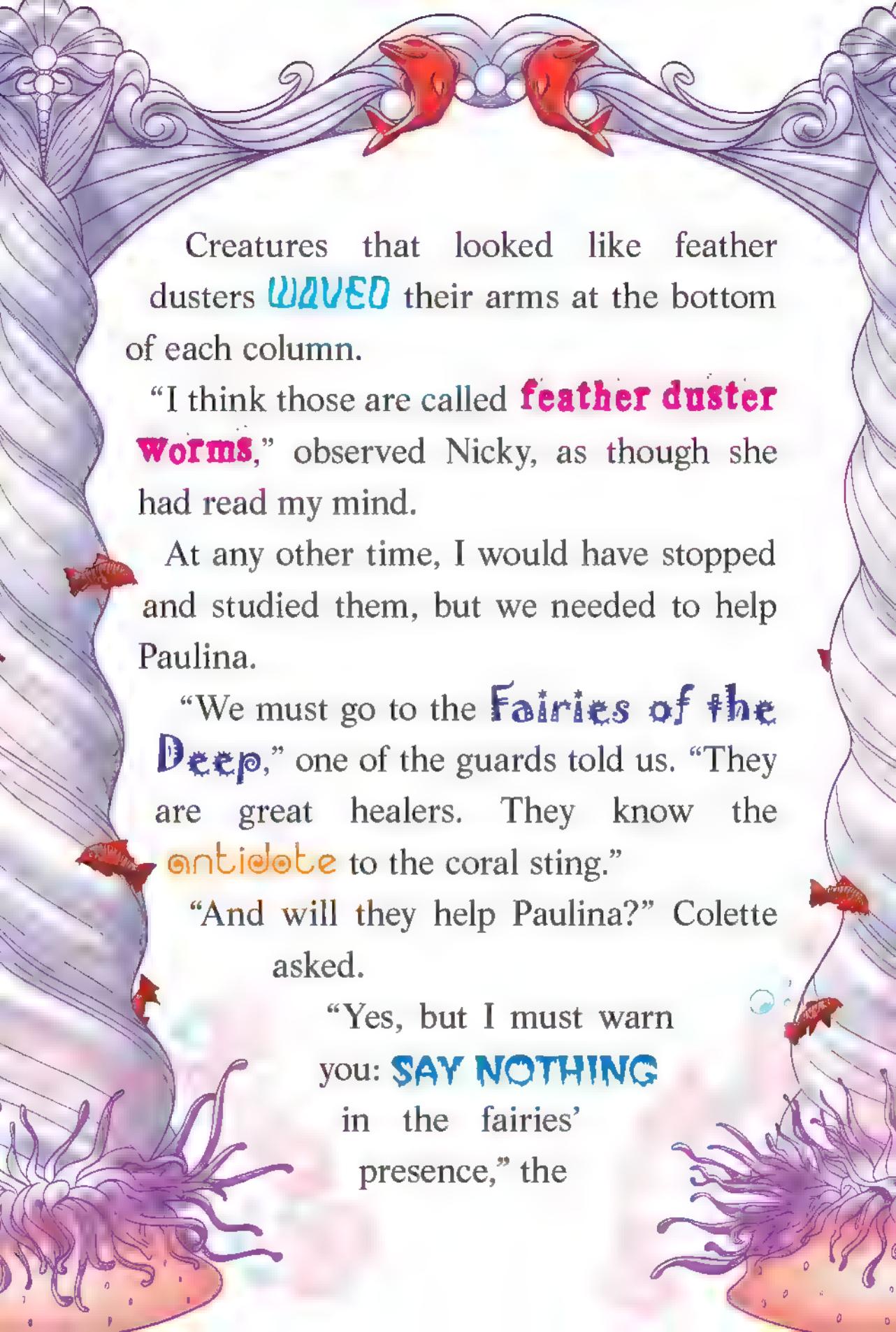
Polished **pink shells** covered the tall front doors of Pink Pearl Castle. The Starry Soldiers **knocked** as soon as we reached them.

The doors opened, and we walked into an **ENORMOUSE** hall. Columns of twisted **lilac** coral supported the high ceiling.

“It’s so **beautiful!**” murmured Violet.

The guards led us down the corridor.





Creatures that looked like feather dusters **WAVED** their arms at the bottom of each column.

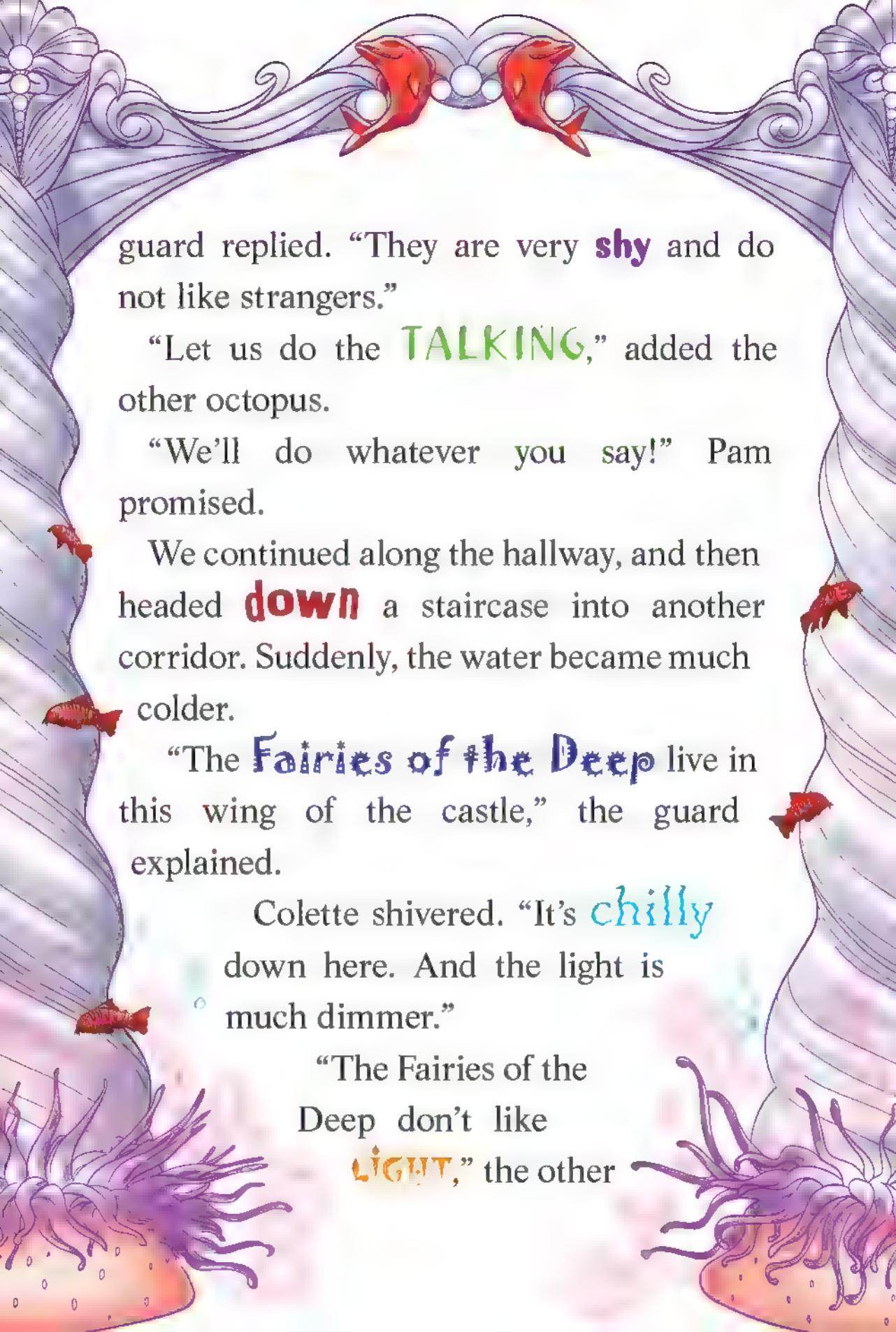
“I think those are called **feather duster worms**,” observed Nicky, as though she had read my mind.

At any other time, I would have stopped and studied them, but we needed to help Paulina.

“We must go to the **Fairies of the Deep**,” one of the guards told us. “They are great healers. They know the **antidote** to the coral sting.”

“And will they help Paulina?” Colette asked.

“Yes, but I must warn you: **SAY NOTHING** in the fairies’ presence,” the



guard replied. “They are very **shy** and do not like strangers.”

“Let us do the **TALKING**,” added the other octopus.

“We’ll do whatever you say!” Pam promised.

We continued along the hallway, and then headed **down** a staircase into another corridor. Suddenly, the water became much colder.

“The **Fairies of the Deep** live in this wing of the castle,” the guard explained.

Colette shivered. “It’s **chilly** down here. And the light is much dimmer.”

“The Fairies of the Deep don’t like **LIGHT**,” the other



octopus said. “They are very shy, as I told you.”

At that moment a figure came moving toward us: a tall, slender fairy with **black hair** and beautiful **amethyst** eyes.

An octopus swam forward and bowed. “Good day, kind Cora,” he said. “Please pardon the **intrusion**, but these strangers have urgent need of your help.”

Cora looked alarmed. “**Strangers?** Here, at Pink Pearl Castle?”

Then she noticed Paulina, who was still in Will’s arms.

“**What happened?**” the fairy asked. She had an **amazing** voice. It sounded like it was coming from the **deepest depths** of the ocean.

“She was **INJURED** by a branch from the coral wall,” replied the guard.



Hang on, Paulina!

Help us!

What happened?



“Can you help her?” Violet blurted out.

Violet had ignored the **WARNING** of the octopuses, and the Fairy of the Deep’s eyes turned as **HARD AS STONE**. But luckily for us, her gaze soon softened.

“Bring her to the Healing Room,” she said.

She turned and led us to a small **circular** room. Shelves covered the walls, each one filled with dozens of **JARS** of healing herbs and potions.

A fairy with dark blue hair swam into the room and **motioned** for us to leave. Our hearts were full of both **fear** for Paulina and **hope** that she would be okay. But we left her in the **CARE** of the fairies.





# THE TALE OF THE FAIRIES

We **waited** and **waited** for the fairies to emerge from the Healing Room with Paulina.

“What’s happening in there?” asked Nicky **anxiously**. “I’m going to go check.”

Will took her by the arm. “We must have **faith** in the fairies. And above all, we must not disturb them!”

“Could we at least **knock**?” Violet asked.

“Will is right,” I said. “Let’s allow the **fairies** to do what they do best.”

Finally, the door opened, and Cora motioned for us to come in.

“**She’s awake!**” Violet cried.

Paulina was seated inside a giant **seashell**, on top of a soft bed of algae.



“*How do you feel?*” Colette asked, gently hugging her.

“Not too bad,” she replied. “I just have a little headache.”

“That is caused by the coral’s venom. It will pass *quickly*,” Cora said.

I turned to her. “How can we thank you?”

“The credit also belongs to my **sister**, Phylla,” she said, pointing to the blue-haired fairy. “And also the **castle guards**. If they hadn’t brought her to us so quickly, we could not have healed her.”

“Thank you, Starry Soldiers!” cheered the Thea Sisters.

“You gave us a **good scare**,” Will said, squeezing Paulina’s paw. “I was so worried about you.”

She **smiled**. “I was trying to be careful, but that current was too strong!”



“Is Paulina **well enough** to continue our mission?” I asked Cora.

She nodded. “Yes, but she **must** be careful not to **bump** into the coral again. Our healing herbs won’t have the same effect a second time.”

“I will be **careful**,” Paulina promised.





“Thank you, Cora and Phylla.”

The fairy nodded. “I can see that your hearts are **GENEROUS** and **good**. Guards, let them go as they please.”

The two Starry Soldiers swam away, and Will approached the fairies.

“We thank you for your **kindness**, Fairies of the Deep,” he said. “But before we go, if we may be so bold, we have another favor to ask you.”

“You may speak,” Cora said.

“We would like to see **Queen Anemone**,” said Will.

The two fairies exchanged a concerned look.

“That may be **difficult**,” said Phylla.

“Why?” I asked.

“It is a **COMPLICATED** time in the kingdom,” she said.



“And the queen is suffering,” added Cora.  
“Because of the **problems** in Aquamarina?” I asked.

“Yes, but the queen also **suffers** because her heart is sad,” said Cora.

“What happened to her?” asked Pam.

“The queen was always a **JOYFUL** fairy with a good heart,” the fairy answered. “Her happiness was complete when she met **Nautilus**, a prince with a heart as good as her own.”

“The two fell in **love**,” continued Phylla. “And Prince Nautilus asked the queen to marry him.”

“**Did she say yes?**” asked Pam.  
“She did, but their **happiness** did not last long,” replied the fairy. “A few days later, the prince **disappeared** without a trace!”

“Nobody knows what happened to him?”



## THE TALE OF THE FAIRIES

asked Paulina. "How can that be?"

"The queen has heard nothing from her **beloved** prince," Phylla answered. "She does not know if his heart changed, or if some **terrible fate** has befallen him."

"Oh, how **tragic!**" said Violet.

"Please, may we speak to her?" I asked.





Cora nodded. “We will ask her if she will see you. But we cannot **promise** anything.”

We followed the two fairies back down the corridor. The **STARRY SOLDIERS** rejoined us, and we headed toward the castle entrance.

We soon stopped in front of a majestic door made of **pink coral** and adorned with shining pearls.

“The **Royal Apartments** are behind this door,” said Phylla.

“Wait here for us,” said Cora, and the two of them entered the queen’s chamber.

They returned a few minutes later, looking **happy**. It was the first time we had seen them **smile** since we had met them.

“The queen has agreed to meet with you, but only for a few minutes,” reported Cora.

“Thank you, **kind fairies**,” I said, and then we followed them to see the queen.



# QUEEN ANEMONE

We found Queen Anemone seated on a marvelous **Seashell-shaped throne**. She was beautiful, with **Turquoise** eyes and long **green** hair. She wore a crown adorned with **shimmering** pearls. On either side of her stood a fairy **attendant**.

The **sadness** on the queen's face was plain to see. She motioned for us to come forward.

"I am **Anemone**, Ruler of Aquamarina," she said. "What brings you to Pink Pearl Castle? You must be from some **far-off land**."

"Correct, Your Majesty," said Will, with a bow. "Thank you for meeting with us. My name is **Will Mystery**. I research fantasy worlds. I saw that your kingdom was in

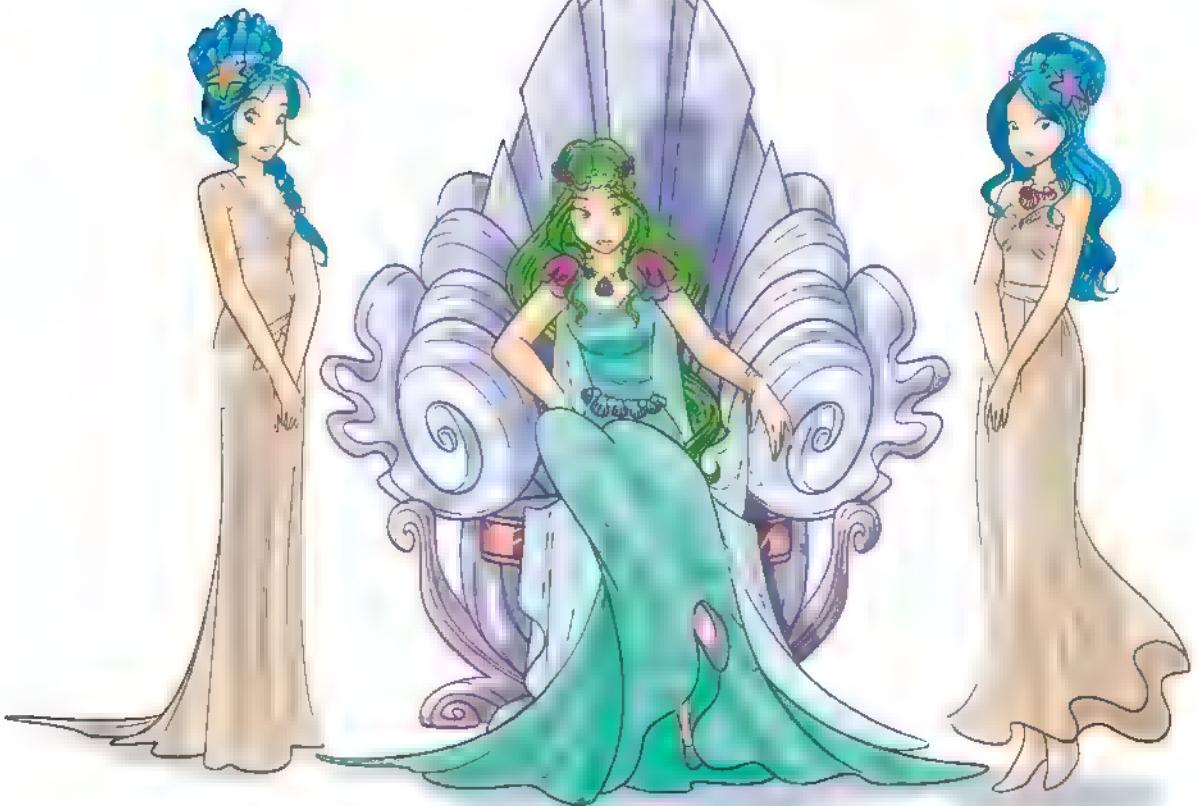


**DANGER**, and my companions and I **HURRIED** here to offer you our help."

The queen nodded. "The **Fairies of the Deep** told me this. But they did not tell me how you knew of our trouble."

"It would take a long time to explain, and we must work **quickly** to save your land,"

*I am Anemone,  
Ruler of Aquamarina!*





Will explained. “We noticed that the **COLORS** of some of your sea creatures have started to fade.”

The queen nodded sorrowfully. “Yes. It is **BREAKING** my heart.”

*“Is it because the Music of the Sea is gone?”* asked Colette.

The queen raised an eyebrow. “And how do you know about that?”

“We have advanced instruments at our research center,” replied Will. “Could you tell us what you know about the music?”

The queen got a **faraway** look in her eyes. “This land was created when the **FIRST** note of the Music of the Sea was **FADED** played,” she said. “The music and the land are one. Without the music, this realm — and everything in it — will **FADE AWAY** forever.”



“That’s **terrible!**” cried Colette. “What happened to the music?”

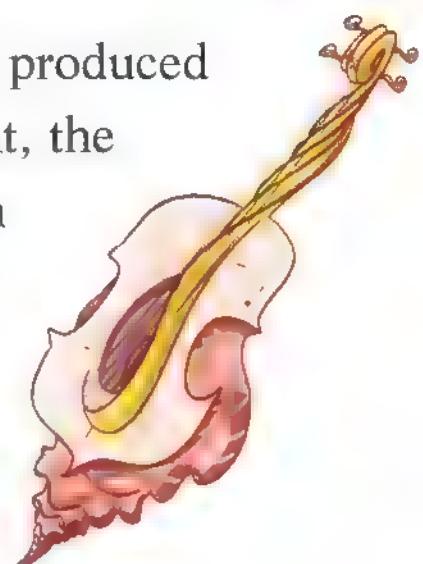
“The Music of the Sea is produced by a very ancient instrument, the **Sea Violin**,” Queen Anemone explained. “The body of the violin is made out of a seashell, and the strings are silk and **golden wire**.”

“It must make a **beautiful** sound,” said Violet, who played violin herself.

“Beautiful and **unique**,” said the queen. “I used to play the Sea Violin every night, to bring **HARMONY** to Aquamarina and keep the realm alive.”

“But what is keeping you from playing it now?” I asked.

The queen’s face **DARKENED**. “The Sea



Violin is gone. It was **STOLEN** from me.”

We were squeakless.

“My guards have **SEARCHED** for it far and wide, but they have not found it,” the queen said sadly.

“Do you have any idea who could have **STOLEN** it?” Will asked.

Queen Anemone shook her head. “All of my subjects know how **IMPORTANT** the music is. Why would any of them want to steal it?”

“There must be someone who knows something about it!” I said.

“There is one creature who can come to our aid,” said the queen. “The **eel of Ages**. She is a giant moray eel, and the **wisest** creature in the ocean. She knows the most deeply **HIDDEN SECRETS** of Aquamarina.”

“What makes her so **wise**?” Paulina asked.

“Only she can consult the **Blue Pearl**,”



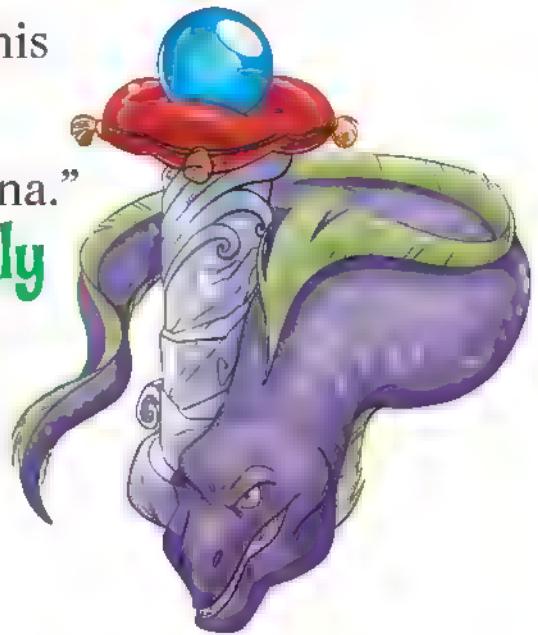
answered the queen. “This gem contains all the knowledge of Aquamarina.”

“If this eel is the **only** creature who can find out where the Sea Violin is, why haven’t you asked her yet?” said Will.

The queen sighed. “Unfortunately, we can’t. The Eel of Ages lives in a cave located beyond the **INFINITE ABYSS**. We fairies cannot travel there because of an **ancient enchantment** on the Infinite Abyss: Any fairy who tries to pass across the abyss will be **transformed** into an ordinary fish.”

Pam shuddered. “**HOW SCARY!**”

The queen nodded. “Some of us, the bravest, have tried. But they have always





come to a **sad** end.”

Paulina got an excited look on her face. “It’s a good thing we came here, then,” she said. “We’re not fairies. So we can **CROSS** the Infinite Abyss!”

I nodded. “That’s **exactly** what we’ll do. We’ll find the Eel of Ages and find out who has stolen the Sea Violin.”

“Thank you, strangers,” said the queen. “But I must **warn** you. When you swim across the abyss, do not **LOOK DOWN** for any reason — or else the abyss will lure you into its **dark depths**,” she added.

“I’m getting **chills** just thinking about it,” said Violet.

“We will be careful,” I promised.

“We have a **PLAN**,” said Will. He turned to the queen. “Can you tell us how to reach the abyss?”



“I will give you a **MAP** of the realm,” she answered. “But remember that the **water currents** can quickly change the path of the **landscape**.”

“Thank you, Your Majesty,” said Will. “The map will be very useful.”

The queen took us to the **Hall of Royal Archives**. Hundreds of volumes of books told the **history** of the fairy realm.

“Here is your map,” Anemone said, handing Will a rolled-up **parchment**. “Now my attendants will show you to your rooms, where you may rest before departing tomorrow.”

As we left the hall, I heard Pam **whisper** to Colette.

“I hope there’s **room service** in this castle,” she said. “My stomach feels like an Infinite Abyss right now!”

# Realm of Aquamarina

Giant  
Sponge

Turquoise  
Grotto

PLACID  
LAGOON

Colossus

Pink Pearl  
Castle

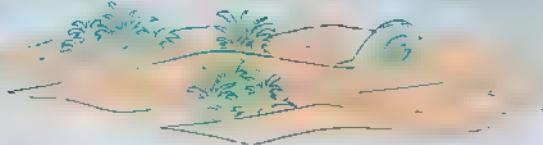
Coral Wall

Evergreen Plain

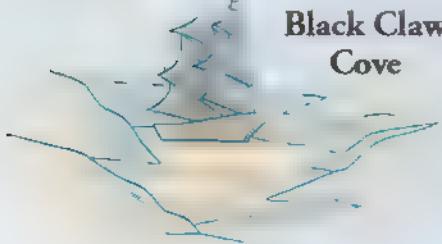
Cave of the Eel  
of Ages

INFINITE ABYSS

**The Moving Dune and the Cobalt Hermit Crab**



**Black Claw Cove**



**Sirens' Bay and the Emerald Sirens**



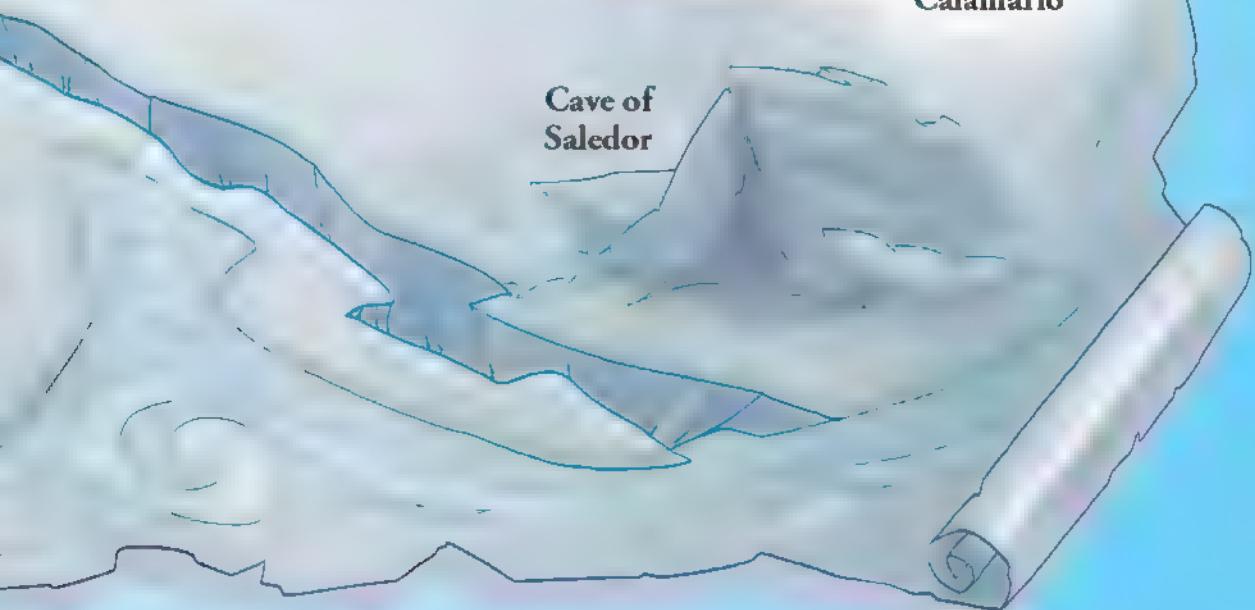
**WINDY CHANNEL**

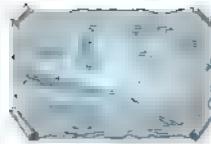


**Sludge Pits and Calamario**



**Cave of Saledor**





# INTO THE ABYSS

The next **tripping**, the queen's staff made us breakfast. We were **refreshed** and ready to go when the queen led us out of Pink Pearl Castle. We stopped at the coral wall.

“I will **open** the passageway for you, so that you may pass through **unharmed**,” Queen Anemone said.

She waved her right hand, and the coral parted, leaving a **wide path** for us to go through.

“Go now,” she told us. “I wish you success.”

“**THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY**,” Will replied. “We will do our best.”

We swam away from the castle, making our way through the coral **quickly** this time.

Will looked at the **MAP** of Aquamarina as



we crossed the Placid Lagoon.

“We should keep going this way,” he said. “It’s the shortest route to the **INFINITE ABYSS**.”

“I **hope** we can find the Sea Violin,” Violet said as we swam.

“I hope so, too,” said Colette. “This land is too **beautiful** to fade away forever.”



“I’m **curious** about this Eel of Ages,” said Pam. “A giant moray eel? Sounds like a **MONSTER!**”

“We’ve met all kinds of creatures in the fantasy worlds,” I reminded her. “Sometimes the **SCARIEST-LOOKING** ones are the nicest and most helpful.”

“I hope that’s true,” Pam said.

“Then maybe poor Queen Anemone won’t look so **sad**,” said Violet.

“We can try to save Aquamarina, but healing Anemone’s **BROKEN HEART** might not be so easy,” Nicky remarked.

A sudden **COLD CURRENT** shot up from the depths, making us shiver in spite of our wet suits. Below us we could see that we were coming to what looked like the edge of a cliff.

**“I think we’ve arrived at the Infinite**



**Abyss!**" Pam said.

Curious, she gazed over the edge. Then she suddenly **TUMBLED** forward!

Colette and I **quickly** grabbed her and pulled her back up.

**"Whoa!** The queen was right," said Pam. "There's a **POWERFUL FORCE** that pulls at anyone who looks down."

"We must be **very careful**," I said. "The slightest distraction could be very dangerous!"

"Let's all **hold paws** and form a chain as



we swim across,” Will said.

“**Great idea, Will!**” said Paulina.

“Whatever you do, don’t look down!” I warned.

“Don’t worry,” said Pam. “I won’t make that **mistake** again. I don’t want to find out what happens down there!”

We linked paws and then set off across the

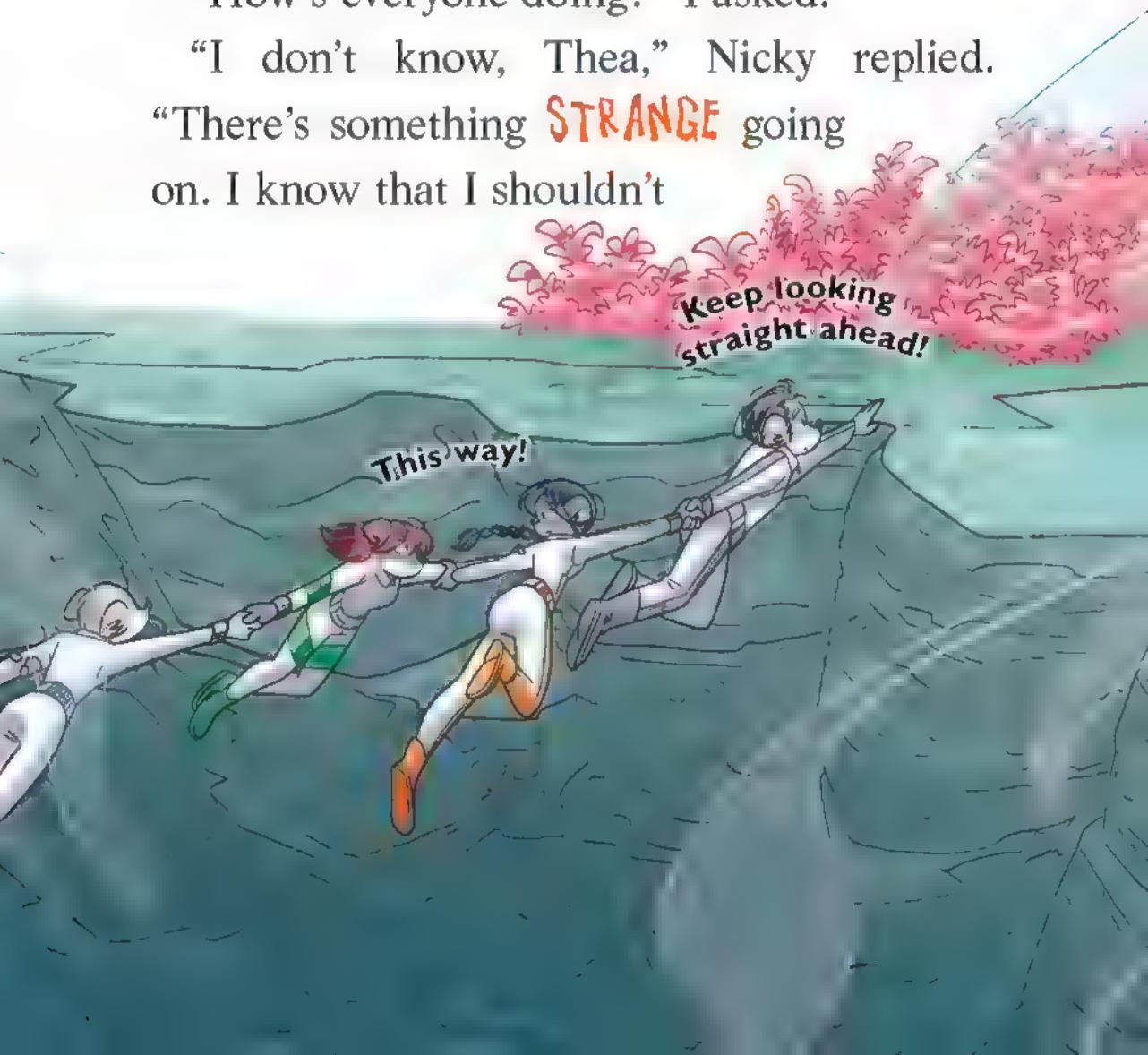




**INFINITE ABYSS.** We tried very hard to stare **Straight ahead**, keeping our eyes on our goal: the cliffs on the other side. Would we make it without being swallowed into the **dark depths**?

“How’s everyone doing?” I asked.

“I don’t know, Thea,” Nicky replied. “There’s something **STRANGE** going on. I know that I shouldn’t



look down, but it's as if a **COLD CURRENT** is trying to pull me to the bottom."

"That is the **challenge** of the abyss," said Will. "It's not going to be easy. But we can't give up!"

"Colette's right," said Violet, who was at the end of our chain. "I know I shouldn't look down, but I feel like I have to. **I can't resist!**"

"Violet, no!" Pam yelled.

Violet gazed into the abyss. Immediately, an **INVISIBLE FORCE** started to pull her down.

Colette didn't let go of Violet's paw.

"Vi, look at me! **YOU CAN DO IT!**" she yelled.

Pam held Colette's other paw. "Everyone, pull them up!"

We pulled with all our might, but the **FORCE** of the abyss was too **STRONG**. Colette's paw slipped out of Pam's and

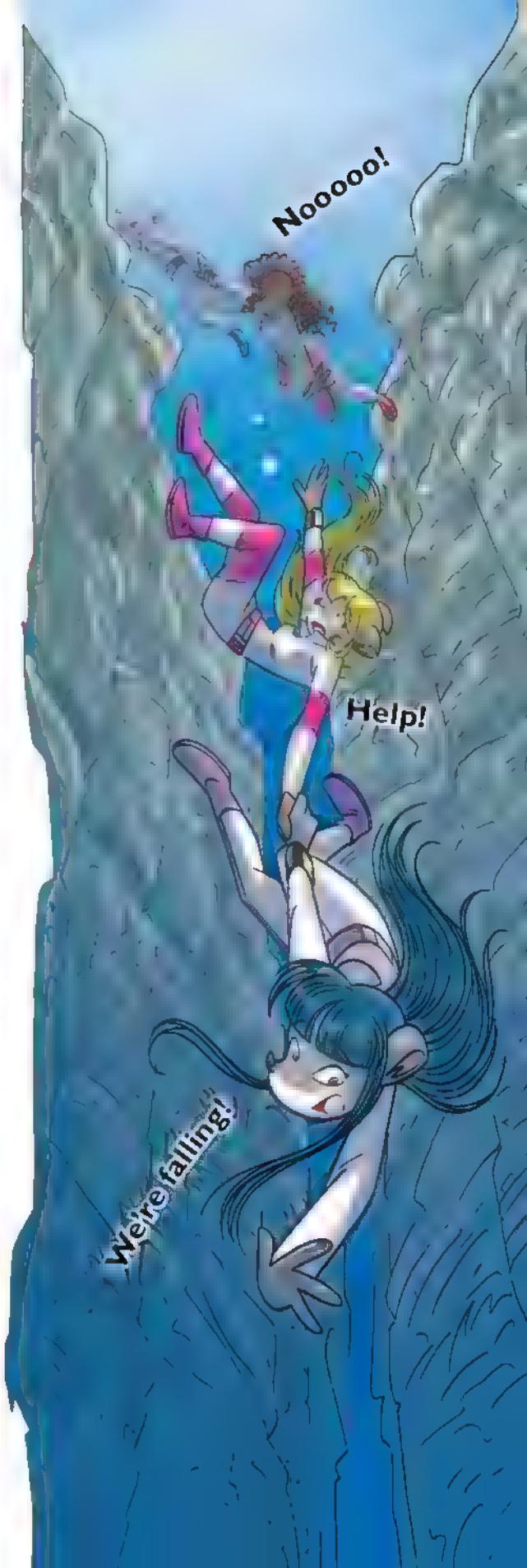
Colette and Violet started to **SINK** down!

**“Noooooooo!”**

Pam cried.

Then I saw a **LIGHT** in Colette’s eyes — a light of pure determination. She did not lose spirit. She gathered her **STRENGTH**, and **slowly** began to swim back up to us, pulling Violet with her.

I held my breath as Colette made her way **TOWARD** us,



finally grabbing hold of Pam's paw once more.

“**HOOORAY!**” we all cheered.

“Colette, you saved me!” Violet said tearfully.

“Actually, it was our **friendship** that saved us,” Colette told her. “When I looked in your eyes, I remembered how you've always been such a **good friend** to me. I didn't want to lose you. That gave me the **STRENGTH** to swim back up.”

“**LET'S KEEP GOING!** We're almost there!” Will called out to us.

We **swam** over the edge of the abyss and onto a wide, underwater field. Green algae covered the ocean floor, **fluttering** in the current.

**We had reached the Evergreen Plain.**



# DANGEROUS COILS

“We made it across the **INFINITE ABYSS!**” Nicky cheered.

“That was a **close call**,” Pam said with a shudder.

Paulina gazed at the Evergreen Plain. “Luckily, we’ve entered a **peaceful** green field.”

“Well, it *looks* peaceful,” Will said, “but I’ve learned to be **suspicious** of places that are too quiet. Let’s proceed with **CAUTION**.”

We soon understood what Will meant. The algae leaves were so high and **BUSHY** that we couldn’t see what dangers might be **Lurking** in them.

Will swam into the plain, and we followed him, keeping our eyes open. Suddenly,

something had DARTED out of the water. “It is a sea snake!” Nicky cried. “They swim in great numbers, usually in schools and had encountered snakes riding along before. So she swam slowly back.

“There’s more swimming, and they’re very fast,” she said.

“Cautious Nicky. They could be dangerous,” Will warned.

“True, but I’ve learned that the best way to stay calm around snakes is the calm,” Nicky said. “No sudden movements.”

“So what should we do?” Pam asked.

“Let’s swim higher,” Nicky suggested.





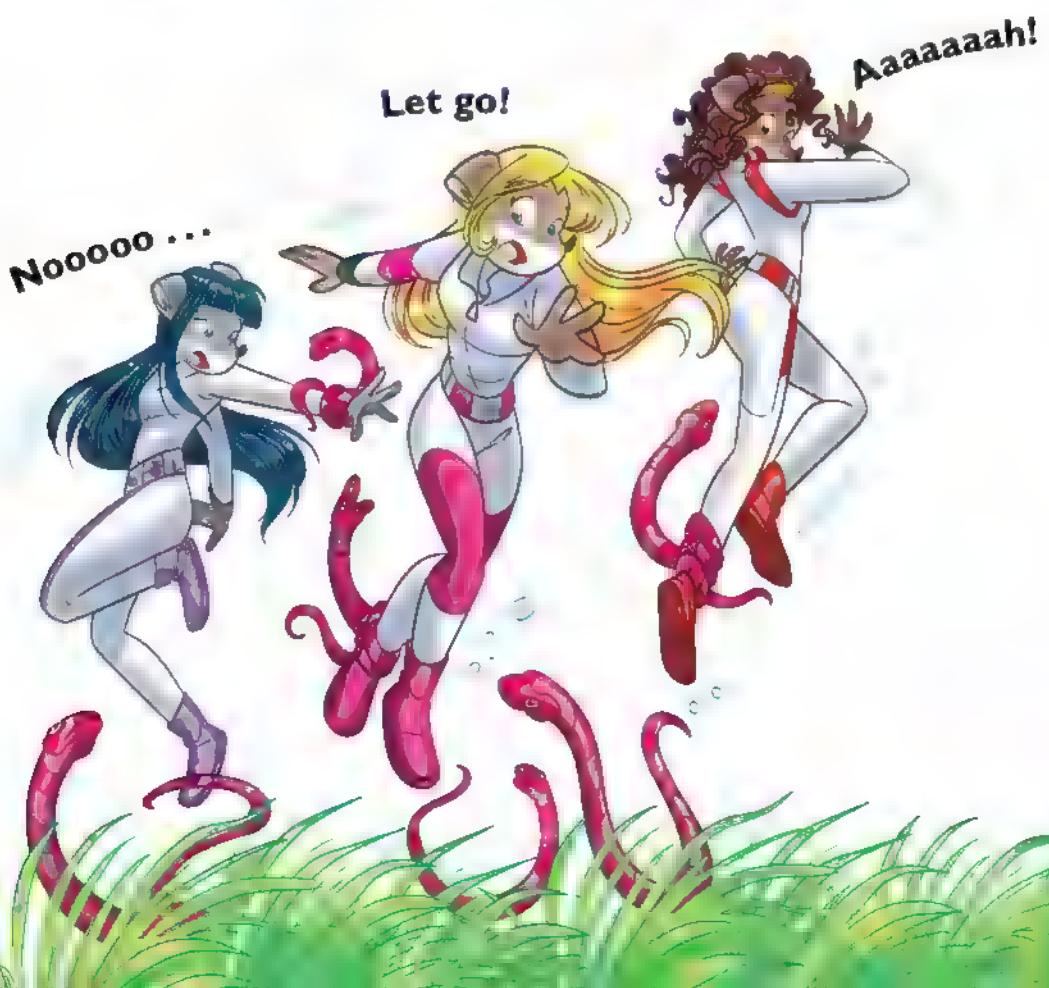
“They might not be interested in us.”

We started to swim higher when Pam cried out.

**“My leg!”**

A snake had wrapped itself around her leg! Another snake darted toward Colette, who **SCREAMED**.

**“THEY'RE ATTACKING US!”** I cried, dodging





a snake coming after me.

“Our wet suits will **PROTECT** us from any bites,” Will said.

“But they’re **SQUEEZING** us!” cried Pam.

“Keep swimming slowly away,” said Nicky. “Maybe they’ll give up.”

But another snake **coiled** around Paulina’s arm, and she gasped. Suddenly, I saw a light **FLASH** on her wet suit, and the snake hurried away from her.

Then I remembered that our wet suits all had built-in cameras.

“Paulina, is this the best time to be taking a **PHOTOGRAPH**?” Nicky asked her.

“I didn’t do it on purpose,” Paulina replied. “I must have turned it on by accident when the snake **startled** me.”

I remembered how the snake had reacted to the flash.



“Paulina, take another picture!” I said. Paulina looked **puzzled**, but she obeyed. **FLASH!** Two snakes coming toward Paulina quickly **swam away** when they saw the light.

“They don’t like the light!” Nicky realized. **“Brilliant!”**

“Everyone, use your cameras!” Will said.





## FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

The snakes didn't like the light at all. One by one, they swam away.

"**HOO****RAY!** They're leaving!" Violet cheered.

"Thank goodmouse," said Colette. "I'd give up my **whole wardrobe** if it meant I'd never have to see another snake again."

Everyone laughed, relieved to be out of danger once more.

**"WAY TO GO, PAULINA!"**

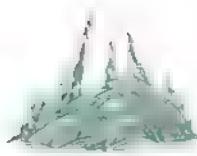
I said.

"It was **an accident**," she said. "But I'm glad it worked!"

"We should **KEEP GOING**," Will said. "We're close to the eel's **cave**."

We swam forward, wondering what kind of welcome we would receive when we reached . . .

**the cave  
of the Eel of Ages!**



# BEYOND THE EVERGREEN PLAIN

Will looked at the **MAP** as we swam across the Evergreen Plain.

“We should be seeing three **ROCKY PEAKS** soon,” he said.

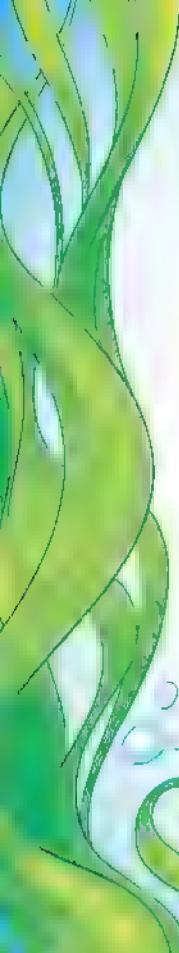
I looked around. All I could see in any direction was a carpet of **green algae** with long fronds.

“This plain seems **endless**,” Nicky remarked.

I felt something **BRUSH** against my leg. Another snake? No, it was the algae!

“Look at the plants!” I cried. “They’re **GROWING** in front of our eyes!”

“They’re almost as **TALL** as we are!” Paulina exclaimed.



“Cheese niblets! My legs are getting all **tangled** up,” said Pam.

“This plain looked beautiful from a distance, but it’s really a **NIGHTMARE**,” observed Violet.

Nicky nodded. “I thought after the **snakes**, our troubles would be over!”

“Just **keep swimming**,” urged Will.





“We’ll get through this!”

We plodded through the algae as best as we could. But soon, the plants were so **TALL** and **THICK** that we couldn’t see where we were and didn’t know **which direction** to take.

Suddenly, Nicky cried out. “**LOOK!** A path!”

Sure enough, we saw a **CLEAR PATH** through the algae right in front of us.

“It seems to have come from nowhere,” Paulina said.

“Will it lead us to the **Eel of Ages?**” Violet wondered.

“We’ll only know if we follow it,” said Nicky.

“But what if it’s some kind of **TRICK?**” worried Colette.

“I’m afraid we’ll have to take that chance,”



said Will. “The algae around us is **TOO THICK** to pass through.”

We swam through the *twisting* path. Two high walls of algae rose up on either side of us.

“I think I can **SEE** something up ahead,” Will said.

“I see it, too,” I said. “It looks like rocks!”

The shape of the rocks became clearer as we swam closer.

“They’re the **THREE PEAKS!**” Nicky cried.

“Thank goodmouse,” said Colette.

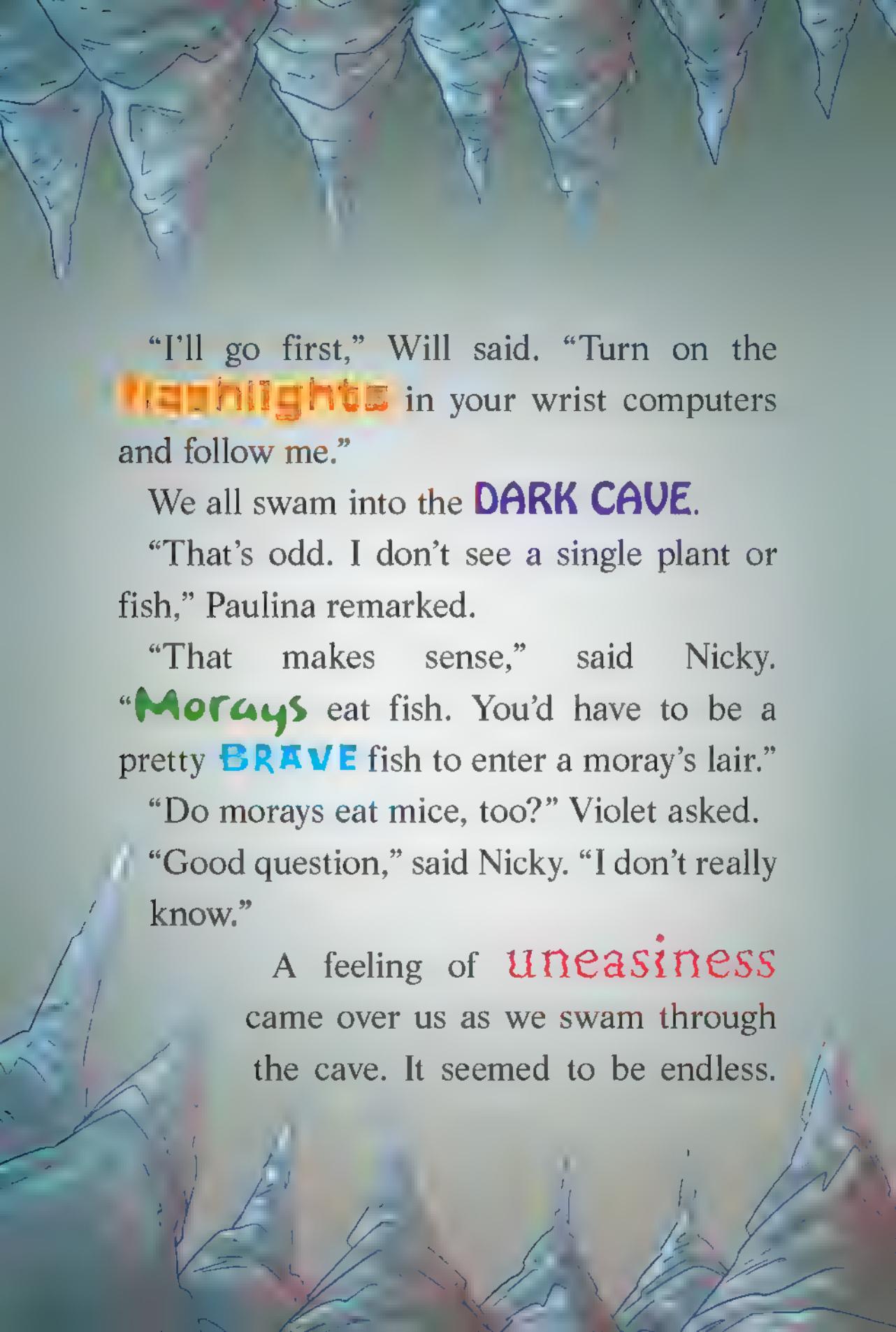
“That must be the cave entrance there, by that **eerie red glow**,” Pam said, pointing.

“Of course the Eel of Ages would live in a **SPOOKY** cave,” said Colette. “I was kind of hoping for another **pearl palace!**”



We found it!

Looks pretty spooky ...



“I’ll go first,” Will said. “Turn on the **highlighter** in your wrist computers and follow me.”

We all swam into the **DARK CAVE**.

“That’s odd. I don’t see a single plant or fish,” Paulina remarked.

“That makes sense,” said Nicky. **Morays** eat fish. You’d have to be a pretty **BRAVE** fish to enter a moray’s lair.”

“Do morays eat mice, too?” Violet asked.

“Good question,” said Nicky. “I don’t really know.”

A feeling of **uneasiness** came over us as we swam through the cave. It seemed to be endless.



But the **red glow** ahead was getting brighter as **we went farther**.

We swam toward the light and came upon a big purple moray eel **curled up** on a cushion. She stared at us **THREATENINGLY**.

We had found the **Eel of Ages!**



# THE EEL'S TEST

The creature stared at us in *silence*. Next to her, on top of a pedestal, was the *Blue Pearl*. It looked almost like a crystal ball!

I stepped forward. "My name is Thea Stilton," I said. "My friends and I are here because we need your **HELP**."

The eel looked me right in the eye. "This is my cave, and I did not *invite* you here," she said in a deep, **CAVERNOUS** voice.

"I don't think she's happy to see us," Pam whispered to Colette.

Will stepped up next to me. "We **apologize** for invading your cave," he said. "But Aquamarina is in **TERRIBLE DANGER**. That is why we are here. We would like to consult the Blue Pearl."



The Eel of Ages burst into **terrifying laughter**. It echoed throughout the cave.

“How **DARE** you speak of the Blue Pearl?” she thundered.

“Queen Anemone advised us to seek it out,” Will answered. “She said that it knows all of the **Secrets of the realm**, and that only you can consult it.”





“And what do you wish to ask the pearl?”  
the eel inquired.

“The Sea Violin has been stolen,” I replied.  
“Without the **Music of the Sea**,  
Aquamarina will slowly fade away. The  
marvelous **COLORS** of the sea creatures  
are already disappearing. We must find the  
**THIEF** and convince them to return the  
violin.”

The eel nodded. “That is a **NOBLE  
QUEST.**”

“Then you’ll help us?” asked Colette.  
“That is not up to me,” replied the eel  
**mysteriously.**

“What do you mean?” asked Will.  
“The Blue Pearl will aid only those who  
are **worthy** of it,” answered the eel.

Will nodded. “I understand. How can we  
prove ourselves?”



"You must pass the test to demonstrate your **COURAGE** and the purity of your hearts," said the eel. "Only then will you be allowed to consult the Blue Pearl."

"What kind of test?" asked Pam.

"You will find out in time," said the eel. "But if you are not **BRAVE ENOUGH** to be tested, you can always return to Pink Pearl Castle."

"We are not afraid," said Will. "We will **PASS** the test, and then you will let us consult the Blue Pearl."

The Eel of Ages approached our friend and **swirled** three





times around his body, moving very slowly. Then she wrapped her body around the pearl.

“**THE PACT IS SEALED**,” she said.

“Please, Eel of Ages, tell us what the **TEST** is,” I said.

“**FOLLOW ME**,” she said, and she swam toward the entrance of the cave.

“Is this a **TRICK** after all?” Colette whispered. “It seems like she’s leading us back outside the cave.”

The eel spun around and stared at Colette. “I am no **trickster!** You will soon find out how **serious** I am.”

Colette turned **PALE**, and we followed the eel in silence. She turned down a corridor and led us to a small room inside the cave. On the wall was a large oval **MIRROR** in a dark frame.



"That frame is made of **obsidian**," Will remarked.

Paulina nodded. "**VOLCANIC STONE**," she said, and the two exchanged a smile.

The Eel of Ages swam to the mirror.

"This is the **Mirror of Deep Truth**," she said. "The mirror will reveal your test, which comes in the form of three difficult **QUESTIONS** that you must seek the answers to. Are you ready?"

We all fell silent.

The eel began to draw circles on the mirror with her tail. The surface of the mirror **swirled**, and then words began to appear.





“It’s the **FIRST QUESTION!**” Nicky exclaimed, swimming closer to the mirror. She read the words out loud.



“Petals . . . so the Golden Sunleaf must be some kind of **flower**,” guessed Colette.

“But where can we find it?” asked Nicky.

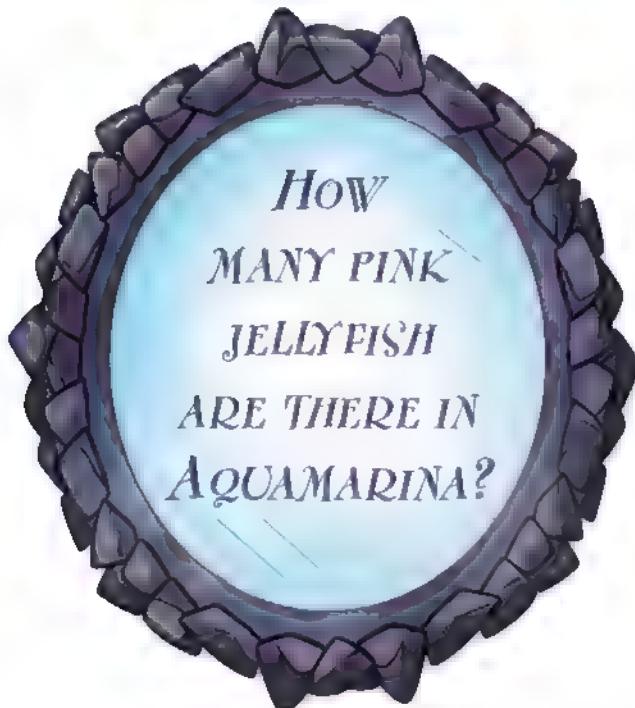
“It only grows in the **Forest of the Shallows**,” the eel answered. “It is west of here.”



“How can there be a forest on the **seafloor**?” asked Paulina, but the eel didn’t answer.

Instead, she **snickered** and then traced another circle on the mirror with her tail.

Once again, the mirror **swirled**, and a new question appeared:



“That’s impossible,” Colette said. “How can we **COUNT** every jellyfish in the ocean?”



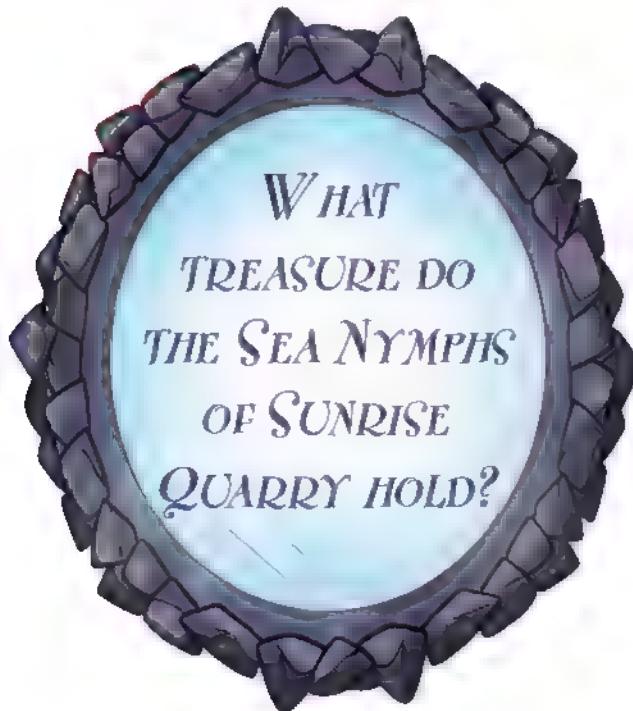
## THE EEL'S TEST

“There is just one school of **pink jellyfish** in Aquamarina,” answered the eel. “Finding them is part of your test.”

“Finding them is just the beginning. Counting them won’t be **EASY**, either,” said Pam. “Jellyfish **STING**!”

“Fortunately, we have our **special wet suits** to protect us,” Will reminded her.

The eel traced a circle on the mirror for a **THIRD** time.





“Sea Nymphs sound much **friendlier** than jellyfish,” Nicky remarked.

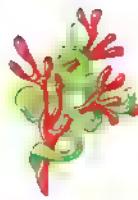
“They may not sting, but they guard their **TREASURE** closely,” said the eel. “Finding the answer may not be as **EASY** as you think.”

“How do we find them?” I asked.

“Again, finding them is part of your test,” she replied. “I can only tell you that **SUNRISE QUARRY** is very ancient. The stone used to construct **Pink Pearl Castle** was taken from there.”

Before we could ask any more questions, the **Eel of Ages** slipped away through a crevice in the rocky wall.

It was time to seek answers to our three questions — and **save Aquamarina!**



# THE FOREST OF THE SHALLOWS

“We have **three** answers to find,” said Violet. “What should we do first?”

“I think we should start with the **FIRST QUESTION**,” said Colette. “At least we know that to get to the **Forest of the Shallows**, we have to travel west.”

Nicky nodded. “That’s right. We have no idea where the Sunrise Quarry is. Or how to find the **pink jellyfish**.”

Will looked at his map. “There’s nothing here about the quarry or the jellyfish. You’re right, Colette. Let’s head **WEST**.”

“I’ll check the **compass** on my computer,” Paulina said, pressing a button on the sleeve of her wet suit. Then she



The compass will help us!

nodded. "It's that way."

We all started swimming west. After about twenty minutes we saw an enormous expanse of **DARK GREEN** vegetation ahead of us.

"Do you think that could be the **Forest of the Shallows?**" asked Violet.

"It sure looks like a forest," said Pam.

When we got closer, we were amazed to be in an underwater jungle! **GREEN** algae bushes grew along the seafloor, and long **VINES** twisted around coral branches.

"Look over there!" Nicky hissed in a loud whisper. "Something's *moving*."

We turned to see a **Pixie** with long green hair dart behind an algae bush. And she wasn't alone.

Several more pixies peeked out at us. They





wore dresses the same color as the *plants* and *coral*.

“Hello!” Pam said. “Do you know where we can find the **golden sunleaf**?”

But the *frightened* pixies scattered.

“I guess we should just try to look for flowers,” suggested Nicky.

Then a school of winged fish swam by. Their heads were *brightly colored*, but their tails were *faded*.

“I hope we find the flower soon,” Violet said sadly. “The loss of the **Music of the Sea** is really starting to affect this world.”

We swam through the forest, but we didn’t find any flowers.

“I’m starting to **WORRY**,” I whispered to Will, not wanting the others to hear.

He nodded. “This test is more difficult



We must find the  
Golden Sunleaf!

Let's go!



## THE FOREST OF THE SHALLOWS

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than I thought it would be.”

Just then, we saw the pixies again, *flitting* between branches of coral.

“Wait!” Nicky called out.  
“Can you please **HELP** us?”

The pixies scattered again —  
except one, who hid  
behind what looked like  
a **red fruit**.

“Those look like tomatoes,”  
Pam remarked.

The other **PIXIES**  
reappeared, swimming  
closer to Pam. They  
seemed less frightened  
now.

“I think we should  
check out those  
fruits,” Pam said.





As we swam toward the fruit, we realized we were in a clearing. And it was filled with hundreds of the **bright red** fruits! Curiously, some of the green-haired fairies were **sleeping** on top of some of the fruits.

“The fruits look like **jewels**,” said Colette.

“And they smell so **sweet**,” Pam said, getting close to one.

At that moment, the fruit opened up to reveal a **gorgeous flower** with **orange** petals.

“It’s a **golden sunleaf**!” Violet cried.

“How can we be sure?” asked Pam. “It’s a **beautiful flower**, but . . .”

“Try taking a few steps back, and follow the **LiGHT**,” Violet suggested.





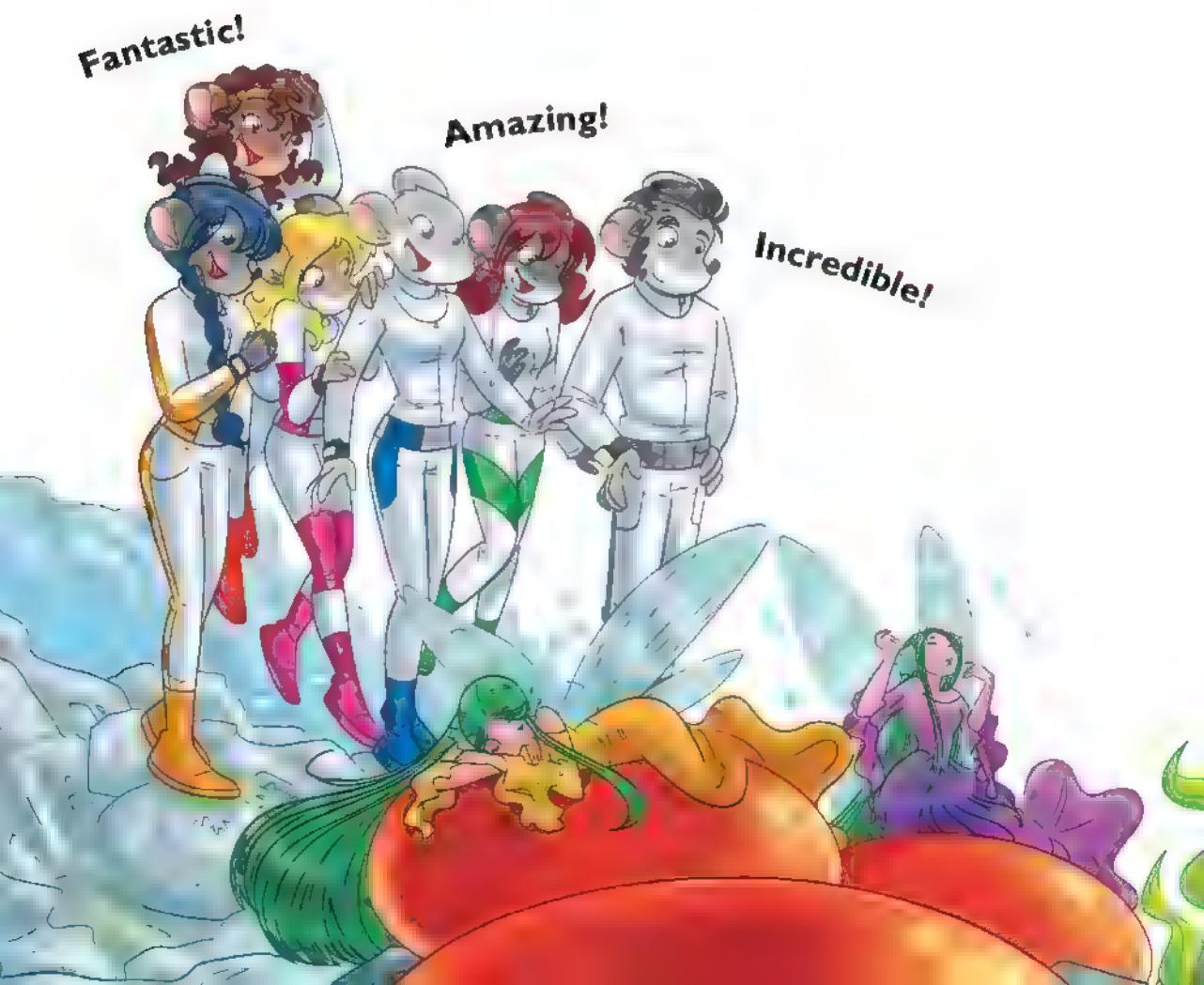
## THE FOREST OF THE SHALLOWS

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We all did as she said, and then we noticed it. A **ray of sunlight** had come through the water, landing on the **flower**.

“The **petals** open up when the sun hits them,” said Colette.

“And then the **PIXIES** wake up,” said





Paulina. “So that’s why it’s called the **golden sunleaf!**”

“That’s right,” I said. “And we also have the answer to our first question. The petals of the Golden Sunleaf are **orange!**”

“One **question** down, two to go,” said Pam.

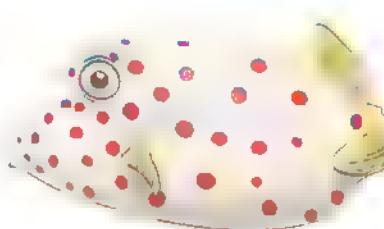




# THE DANCE OF THE PINK JELLYFISH

“We still don’t know **which way** to go,” Nicky pointed out.

“Let’s head **OUT** of the Forest of the Shallows and then check the map,” Will suggested.



We agreed, and wove through **tangled vines** until we found ourselves on the edge of a cliff. Then we swam across the **abyss** that had opened up below us. Luckily, this time there was no **mysterious** force pulling us downward: just many **FISH** of every shape and color.

“Amazing! I’ve never seen **so many fish** at once!” exclaimed Violet.



“Me neither, Vi! They’re as **colorful** as flowers,” Colette observed with delight.

Then Violet frowned. “Yes, but some of their colors are **fading**.”

“We’ve got to get the **Sea Violin** back into Queen Anemone’s hands,” said Nicky.

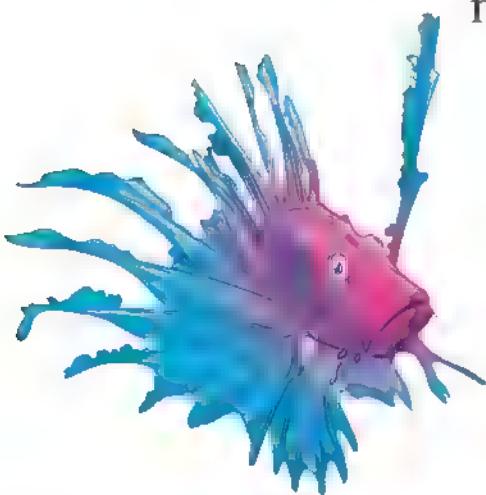
“I hope we can figure out where to go next,” said Pam.

“Any **LUCK** with the map, Will?” I asked.

Will shook his head.

“Not yet.”

Then Violet swam toward a large, **purple**-





and-yellow fish.

“Look how big and **ROUND** this fish is,” she remarked.

“It’s a **BLOWFISH!**” warned Nicky. “Be careful. They’re **SHARP!**”

“Sharp? But it’s so cute, like a **balloon**,” said Violet.

“It **SWOLWS UP** when it feels threatened,” Nicky told her. “A blowfish swallows water to make it look **BIGGER** and frighten predators. It’s also covered in **POINTED SPINES** so that other fish won’t eat it!”

“It’s a good thing you know so much about fish, Nicky,” Colette said. “Are there any others we should **worry** about?”



“It’s hard to tell,” Nicky replied. “Who knows what **STRANGE CREATURES** we might find here in Aquamarina!”

“I’m sure we’ll find many,” Will said. “Let’s keep **swimming**.”

As we swam, the water became shallower. Below us we could see **tunnels**, caves, and curious rock structures that stretched out like a **MAZE**.

“What’s that up ahead?” Violet asked. “Those creatures look like pink **butterflies**.”

I followed Violet’s gaze. Pink creatures **fluttered** through the water.

“They’re the **pink jellyfish**!” I said. “Now we can answer our second question.”

“But how do we **count** them? There are so many,” Paulina said.

“And I don’t think we should get any closer,” added Pam. “Those **tentacles**



don't look too friendly."

"I know that they're dangerous, but they look so **elegant**," Colette remarked. "They remind me of **dancers** in fluffy organza gowns."

Paulina lit up. "Colette, can you **repeat** what you just said?"

"Um, the jellyfish look like they're wearing **gowns**?"

Colette repeated, uncertainly.

"Not that part — you said they looked like **dancers**!" Paulina exclaimed. "That gave me an **idea**, although I'm not sure if it will work."

Will smiled. "Give it a try. **You** always have great **ideas**!"



Paulina smiled back. “Thanks. Here’s what I’m thinking. Do you see how the jellyfish move? They **WAVE** along with the current.”

“Almost like they’re dancing!” said Violet.

“**EXACTLY!**” Paulina said. “What if we manage to draw them into a kind of a dance? If we could get them all to **SWIM ALONG** and line up, they’ll be easier to count.”

Will nodded **thoughtfully**. “That might work.”

I quickly turned Paulina’s idea into a plan. “Okay, Colette, Violet, and Paulina will start dancing and get the jellyfish to follow them. Nicky and Pam will get on the end of the line. And Will and I will **count them** as they swim by that **POINTY** rock over there.”

We all got into position, and Colette started to swim as if she were dancing.

Paulina and Violet imitated her, flapping



It's working!

Go on!



This way ...

Follow us!

Come on!

Let's count  
them!

Perfect!

their arms like **butterfly wings**.

A moment later, one of the jellyfish **danced** toward them, waving its tentacles. A second jellyfish followed behind it, and then a third, and a fourth . . .

What a **SPECTACLE** of grace and harmony! The dance of the pink jellyfish was so **beautiful** that it took our breath away.

But Will and I had to concentrate on our task, and we **carefully** counted each jellyfish as it passed by.

**“One hundred and three jellyfish!”**  
I cried when the last creature had danced past us.

Paulina recorded the number on her computer.

“Great job, Paulina,” Will said. “Your plan worked! Now we just have to figure out how to find **Sunrise Quarry . . .**”



# THE MOODY MOLLUSKS

“Maybe we can find a pixie or another creature who can give us **directions**,” Nicky suggested.

So we swam forward, hoping to find someone who could help us. We **swam** and **swam** with no luck.

“**Cheese and crackers!**” Pam moaned. “We’re so close to passing our test, but I feel like we’ll never do it!”

“We must have **FAITH**,” I told her. “In fact, I think I see something moving up ahead!”

As we swam closer, we saw two **strange-looking mollusks** ahead of us. Each had a shell on its head and long **arms** sticking out.



“It looks like they’re **BUILDING** something,” Nicky remarked.

They appeared to be making a hut out of **Pink** and **Blue** stones, and they looked very **busy**. As soon as they saw us, they stared at us suspiciously.

“**Who are you, and what do you want?**” asked the mollusk with a green shell.

“We are **sorry** to disturb you —” I began, but he interrupted me.

“That’s right! You’re **disturbing** us! So please get out of here!” he said, waving me away with his arms.

“We just need some **information**,” I pressed on. “It won’t take long.”

“We don’t have any time to **help** you,” the mollusk said. “My wife and I must finish building our house before the **CURRENT** arrives.”



“What current?” I asked.

His wife rolled her eyes. “You **DON’T KNOW** anything, do you?”

“**And anyway, we don’t have time to talk to you now!**” her husband added.

“There’s no reason to be **RUDE**,” Colette told them.

The mollusk looked at her, rolled his large, **ROUND EYES**, and put down one of the rocks he was moving.

“Why oh why can’t I get any **peace** today?” he wailed.

“Earlier, a **HERMIT CRAB** came and destroyed our home — he took all of our seashells!”

“I’m so **sorry** to hear that,” Colette said sympathetically.





## THE MOODY MOLLUSKS

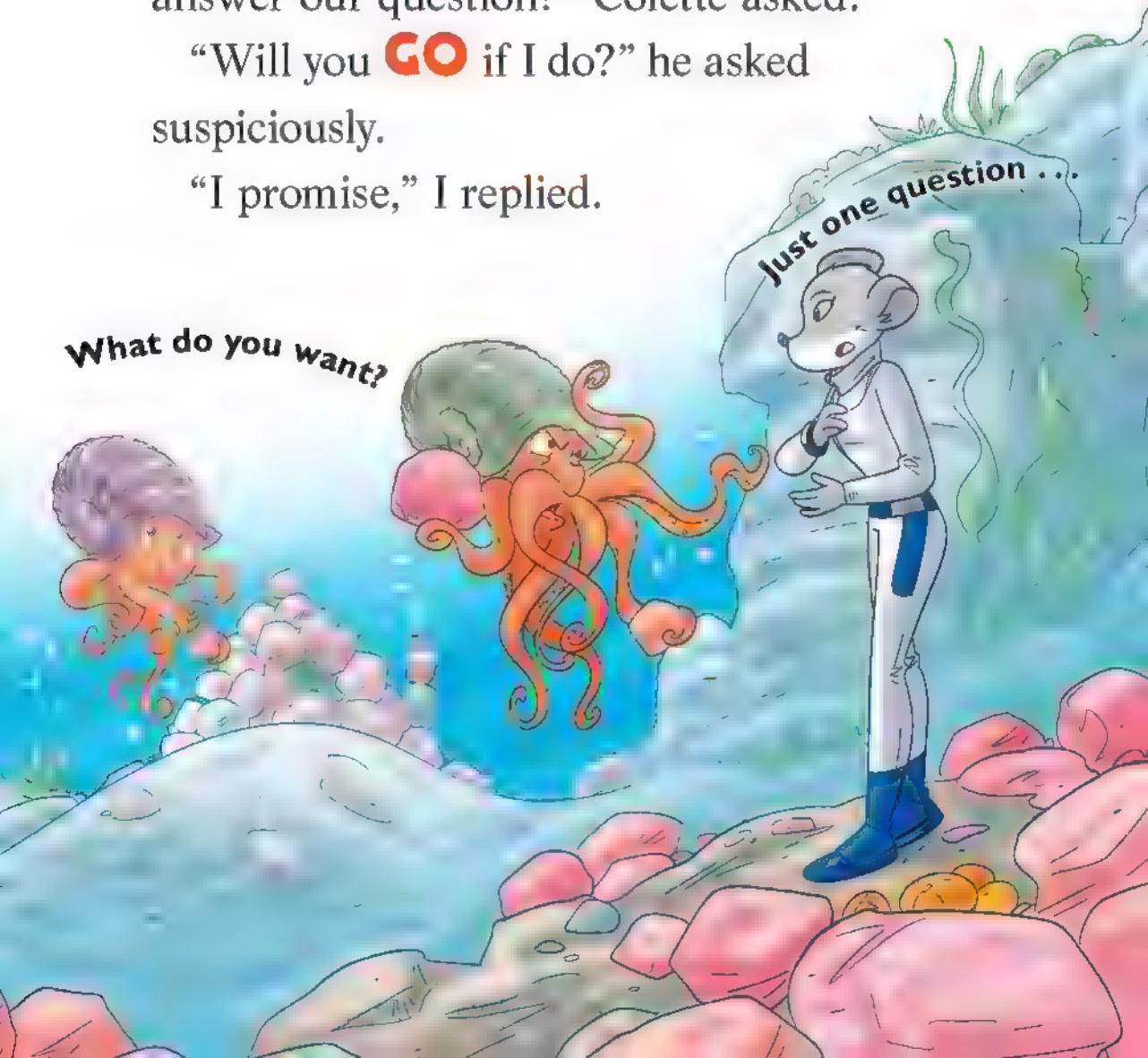
“So that’s why you are so **busy** building your home.”

“Right! And we don’t have time to waste chit-chatting!” he snapped.

“We understand, but could you **please** answer our question?” Colette asked.

“Will you **GO** if I do?” he asked suspiciously.

“I promise,” I replied.





“Okay then,” he said with a **Sigh**. “What do you want to know?”

“Where did you get those **BEAUTIFUL** stones you are using to build your house?” I asked.

“**HA!** I get it now!” the mollusk cried. “You want to **TAKE AWAY** our stones. Well, you can’t have them!”

“We don’t want your stones,” I said. “But we are trying to find **Sunrise Quarry**.”

“Did you get your stones from there?” asked Paulina. “And if you did, can you **kindly** tell us how to get there?”

The mollusk **GLARED** at us.

“Why do you want to go to **Sunrise Quarry**?” he asked.

“We are searching for the **Sea Nymphs**, to learn about their treasure,” Colette told him.

“**Impossible**,” he said, shaking his head.



“Their treasure is a great secret!”

“We know, but we have to **TRY** to find it,” Colette said.

“Why are you so interested in it?” asked the mollusk’s wife.

“It’s a long story, but the **safety** of Aquamarina depends on it,” Will chimed in.

“That includes you and your new house,” Colette pointed out.

“This house is already an **ABYSS’S WORTH** of work!” the mollusk cried. Then he frowned, thinking. “If I help you, what do I get for it?”

Colette thought quickly. “How about a **fuchsia hair tie**?”

“What’s a hair tie?” the mollusk asked.

Colette removed the hair tie from her blonde hair. “It’s **stretchy**,” she told him. “You could tie clumps of algae together



with it, or attach two rocks together, or use it as a **decoration**."

The mollusk was intrigued. "All right, you have a deal!"

Colette gave him the hair tie, and the mollusk **POINTED** with one of his arms.

"Go **that way**, to the end of the boulders," he instructed. "Then wait for the **CURRENT**. It will be here soon, and it will take **you** right to the quarry."





“*Are you sure?*” asked Nicky.  
“Do I look like a **liar** to you?” the mollusk snapped.

“Of course not! Sorry,” said Nicky.  
“Thanks for your **help**,” I said quickly.  
“You’re welcome,” said the mollusk. “Now **scram!**”

“And **good luck!**” his wife added, smiling.  
“Good luck building your house,” Violet called behind her as we swam away.

We could hear the mollusk **CALLING** after us as we left.

“**Nothing is as it seems!**” he yelled.  
“Remember that when you meet the nymphs!”  
“What an **odd** mollusk,” Paulina remarked.  
“And **cranky**, too,” Pam said.  
Then, just as the mollusk had said, the **CURRENT** came and carried us far away.



## THE SEA Nymphs

Soon the **OCEAN CURRENT** stopped pushing us and left us in calm water on a plateau of dark rock. It was embedded with pieces of milky **mother-of-pearl**.

“Mother-of-pearl is so **Pretty**,” Violet remarked, stroking the stone with her paw. “It’s the lining of seashells, isn’t it?”

“That’s right!” Nicky said.

“The **Sunrise Quarry** must be somewhere nearby,” said Will, looking around.

“We’ve got to be **CLOSE**,” Nicky agreed, swimming forward. “Come on!”

We followed her to the **EDGE** of the plateau — and our jaws dropped!

The inside of the mountain had been excavated, and a **VILLAGE** had been

constructed in the open space. *green plants* grew over the stone houses.

**“INCREDIBLE!”** Nicky exclaimed.

“This must be where the Sea Nymphs live,” I observed.

“I hope they’re **NICER** than those mollusks,” Colette said.

“Yes, nice enough to tell us where they’re



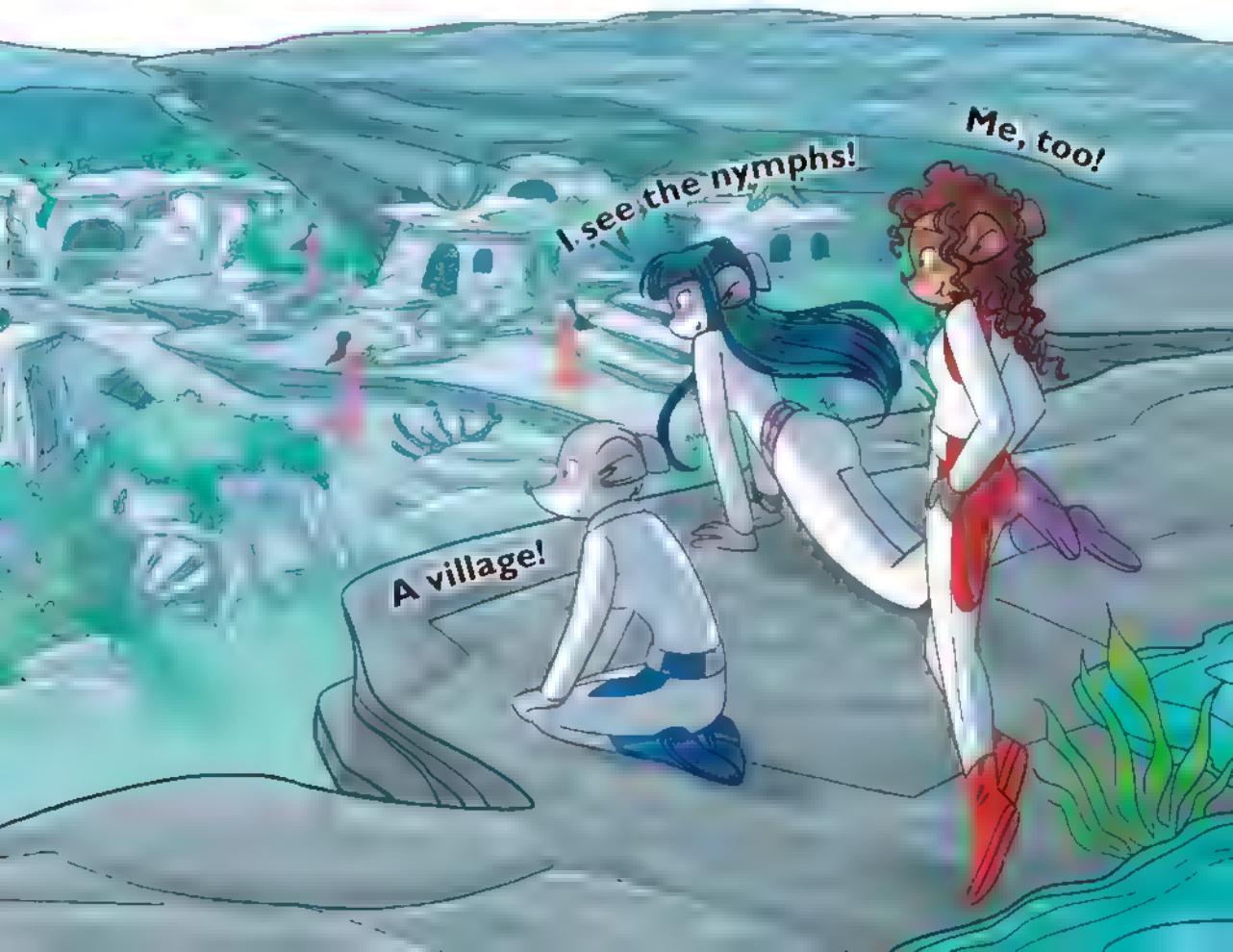


**hiding** their treasure," Pam added.

"**Let's find out!**" Nicky said, swimming down into the village.

"Slow down," Will warned. "We should **STICK TOGETHER** until we know how these nymphs feel about visitors."

As we swam toward the village, Violet **sniffed** the air. "Do you smell that?"





“Yes. Something smells **DeLicious!**” agreed Colette.

Pam’s stomach growled. “It’s reminding me how **hungry** I am!”

We touched down on the floor of the quarry. A nymph came out of the house in front of us. She wore a pretty **Pink** tunic and carried what looked like a **PIE**.

The nymph stopped when she saw us, and we **smiled** at her.

“Hello,” Will said.

The nymph remained **silent**. A second nymph carrying a tray of cookies joined her, and they exchanged a look of **SURPRISE**.

More nymphs came forward, **surrounding** us. They stared at us without saying a word.

“Please pardon the **INTRUSION**,” I said. “We don’t want to disturb you.”

“It looks like we’ve **interrupted** your



meal," said Colette, with a nod to the plates they were carrying.

The nymphs continued to **STARE** at us, and we started to feel uncomfortable.

"Maybe they don't *understand* what we're saying," Nicky suggested.

"Or maybe they don't **COMMUNICATE** with words," Paulina guessed.

Finally, the nymph





holding the **PIE** took a step toward us.

“Welcome to the Sunrise Quarry, kind guests,” she said. Her voice was as **sweet** and **MELODIOUS** as a flute. “I am Maira.”

“And I am Halia,” said the nymph holding the cookies. “Please *forgive us* for not speaking up right away. We did not mean to be **impolite**.”

We all let out a **sigh** of relief.

“You don’t need to apologize,” Will said. “We are sorry to come without an invitation, but we are here for a **very important** reason.”

“What reason?” Maira asked.

“We are trying to save **Aquamarina**,



and you can help us,” Will replied.

“Us? How?” asked Halia.

“We’re seeking answers to three questions,” answered Paulina. “We need to find out what *precious treasure* you guard.”

Halia shook her head. “We can’t tell you that.”

“*Why not?*” asked Violet, surprised.

“It is not for us to reveal,” said Maira. “Our treasure only reveals itself to those who are *WORTHY*.”

We looked at one another *sorrowfully*. What were we going to do now?

“You must be *hungry*,” Maira said. “Please, sit down at our table with us.”

“We will speak more as we eat,” added Halia with a



**mysterious smile.**

“We **GLADLY** accept your invitation,” Will said.

The Sea Nymphs led us to a **table** topped with food. More nymphs joined us.

“Wow, this all looks **delicious!**” exclaimed Pam.

“Try this algae pie,” offered Maira.

“And I baked some **cookies**,” said Halia.

We all sat down and began to eat.





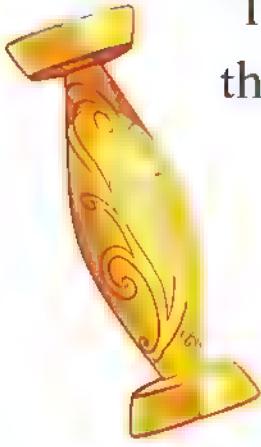
# THE LOOM OF HAPPINESS

The Sea Nymphs were very **kind** and **hospitable** to us. I hoped once we knew them better, they might **reveal** their secret to us.

“Now Galene and I have something to **Show** you,” said Maira, nodding to another nymph when our meal was done.

The two nymphs led us into one of the stone houses. It was **simple**, but welcoming. In the middle of the room was a large **loom** made of golden wood. Someone had started weaving a piece of cloth on it.

Galene handed Colette a **golden spool**. “This is **MISSING** its thread,” Colette remarked.



The nymph smiled. “You don’t **SEE** the thread, but it’s there.”

“I don’t understand,” said Colette.

“You will **understand** if you weave,” Galene promised.

Colette sat down and started to pass the **spool** from one side of the **loom** to the other. Or at least, she tried.

“It’s not working!” she said.

“Free your **MIND** and your **heart**,” Maira coached her.

Colette tried again, but soon she shook her head. “I can’t do it.”

“Can I try?” Nicky asked.

Nicky took the spool and passed it through the **threads** on the loom, but once again, **NOTHING** happened.

“I don’t see the thread, and I don’t **feel** it, either,” she said, frustrated.



The nymphs watched carefully as Violet tried next, and then Paulina, with no luck.

“My turn!” said Pam.

Pam took the spool, closed her eyes, and tried to think about something that made her **happy**. To our great surprise, we could see thread appear as Pam passed the spool **BACK** and **FORTH** across the loom. Little by little, the weaving **TOOK SHAPE** before our eyes.

“**Pam! You’re doing it!**” cried Violet.

Pam opened her eyes.

“Did I really do that?” she asked in wonder.

“Yes!” I replied.

Pam looked carefully





at the images woven on the cloth. "It's us!"

"On the night of your **bi<sup>n</sup>thday**," Paulina remembered.

"When we all made you that great **PIZZA**," added Nicky.

Pam nodded. "That was the best birthday **present** ever!"

"We were happy to give it to you!" said Colette. "We're your friends!"

The two nymphs **smiled** at each other, nodding.





“You have discovered the secret of the *Loom of Happiness*,” said Galene. “It was given to us by Queen Anemone’s grandmother as a symbol of her **gratitude**, because the stones that build Pink Pearl Castle were mined from Sunrise Quarry.”

“So it’s true that the castle stones came from here!” said Will.

“Yes, and they are very special stones, because they are able to contain **good feelings**,” said Galene.

“Just like the loom’s **fabric**,” added Maira.

“What do you mean?” asked Colette.

“When woven together, the threads tell the **story** of our feelings,” explained Maira. “Events and people who stir our **emotions** become visible in the fabric when we free our **hearts**. And there’s just one thing that makes this all possible.”



“What is it?” asked Will.

“This,” the two nymphs replied. They slowly pressed their palms together. When they pulled them apart, a *thin thread* made of pure light stretched between them.

“This thread represents the tie of **friendship** between us,” said Galene.

“So, Pam was able to **WEAVE** the cloth because she was thinking about friendship?” asked Violet.





“That’s right,” said Maira. “By thinking of the **AFFECTION** that connects you, she made the thread appear.”

Pam nodded. “That’s true. Although the first thing I thought about was the **tasty cheese pizza**.”

We all laughed.

“But then I thought about all of the **nice things** you’ve done for me, and how close we’ve been,” Pam concluded, looking at the Thea Sisters.

“**Group hug!**” shouted Nicky, and they all hugged one another tightly.

“**Friends forever!**” the mouselets sang out.

The nymphs, Will, and I looked on with tears in our eyes.

“Now can you show us the treasure?” Will asked the nymphs. “We need to know what



it is in order to consult the *Blue Pearl*."

"We need to find out who stole the queen's **Sea Violin**," I added. "Without its music, your world will **disappear**."

The nymphs were silent.

Then I looked at the **THEA SISTERS** and realized that the answer was right in front of my eyes!

"I get it!" I cried. "We've already found the treasure!"

The nymphs nodded and smiled. "Yes. **FRIENDSHIP** is the greatest treasure that exists."

"We've done it! We've answered the **third question**!" Will cheered.

It was the end of a **long day**. We stayed in the village of the Sea Nymphs and got a good night's sleep.



# THE BLUE PEARL

The next morning we woke up rested and **ready** to get back to the Eel of Ages. We were anxious to pass her test with answers to all **three** questions. So we said good-bye to our new nymph friends and **swam** back to the eel's cave.

When we got there, we found the eel **curled up** on her cushion.

“You’ve returned at last,” she said. “Can you **answer** the three questions?”

“We can,” Will replied.

“Good. Then **APPROACH**,” she ordered.

We obeyed, and she asked us the first question.

“Tell me: **What color are the petals of the Golden Sunleaf?**” she asked.

“**Orange**,” Pam replied.

The moray smiled. “Correct. Now, to the second question: **How many pink jellyfish are there?**”

Paulina checked the number on her wrist computer. “One hundred and three,” she said confidently.

The eel’s eyes widened. “Are you **sure**?”

“Of course. We **counted** them,” Paulina replied.

An irritated look crossed the eel’s face. No one had ever gotten this far before. “Correct. Now to the final question: **What is the treasure of the Sea Nymphs of the Sunrise Quarry?**”

The Thea Sisters looked at Will and me, and we understood. They wanted to answer this one together.

“**FRIENDSHIP**,” they said. “The Sea



"Wynables' treasure is the pearl."  
As soon as they spoke, the blue pearl  
glowed with a **green** light.  
"What's happening?" asked Will.  
"The **Blue Pearl** has chosen you both,"  
the Earl of Agar said. "It is ready to bring  
you both home."





## THE BLUE PEARL

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“May we ask it now?” I asked.

“**Watch and wait,**” answered the eel.

Then the Eel of Ages swam **around** and **around** the Blue Pearl. The pearl began to **SHINE** like a star in the night sky.

“We’d like to ask it who **stole** the Sea Violin,” Will said.

“I know,” said the eel, continuing to **wind**





around the pearl. “And so does the pearl. See for yourself.”

We all stared at the Blue Pearl.

Suddenly, the **LIGHT** inside the sphere went out. Then it quickly lit up again. **Colorful** lights flashed from the pearl, projecting a series of **IMAGES** on the wall of the cave, one after another. They appeared so quickly that it was difficult to tell what we were seeing. An underwater **MOUNTAIN**? A large **FISH**?

The Eel of Ages kept circling the Blue Pearl. When she finally stopped, the light **Faded** from the pearl, but it was still a **SPLENDID JEWEL**.

The eel settled back onto her cushion. “The pearl has given you its response,” she announced. “It is true that someone has stolen the **Sea Violin**.”

“Who was it?” Colette asked **eagerly**.

“The pearl did not say,” the eel replied.

A wave of **disappointment** crashed over us.

“Then how will we find it?” Pam wondered.

“The pearl did not give a name, but it showed a **location** where you will find whoever stole the violin,” the eel replied.

We were hopeful once more. “**Where is it?**” I asked.

“You will find the thief at the **MOVING DUNE**, a desert zone in the northern part of the realm,” answered the eel.

Will nodded. “I remember seeing it on the **MAP**,” he said, unrolling the parchment that the queen had given him. He pointed to a spot. “It’s right here.”

“We must go there **right away**,” I said.

“I warn you, it will be a **DIFFICULT** journey,



full of **danger**,” said the Eel of Ages. “And there’s one more thing you must know before you depart.”

“What’s that?” Colette asked.

“Keep a close **EYE** on the thief,” she replied. “There is a veil of mystery around the one who stole the violin.”

“What kind of mystery?” asked Will.

“I have nothing more to say. This is all the *pearl* has revealed,” the eel said.

“I guess we’ll **FIND OUT** when we find the thief!” said Pam.

“Thank you, Eel of Ages,” Will said. “We have to go now.”

She nodded. “**Good luck** in your task.”

As we left the **CAVE** I glanced back. The eel was watching us with a gaze that seemed **sad**, as if she was sorry to see us go.



## HEEEEEEEELP!

“The **Eel of Ages** was very kind in the end,” Colette said as we swam away from the cave.

“Yes,” agreed Paulina. “She seemed a little **sorry** that we were leaving.”

“It must be very **lonely** in that cave,” Violet said sympathetically.

“I just can’t believe the Blue Pearl didn’t give us the **name** of the thief,” said Pam. “How will we know who to look for when we get to the Moving Dune?”

“**We’ll figure it out**,” Will said confidently. He stopped and unrolled the map again. “First, we need to determine where we’re going.”

Paulina looked over his shoulder. “It looks



like we need to cross the **Windy Channel**,” she said.

“That name doesn’t sound too promising,” Nicky remarked.

“And first we’ll have to cross back over the Infinite Abyss!” said Pam.

“We can face any **difficulty** if we do it together,” I reassured them.

We started swimming toward the Windy Channel.

“We’ve got a **long trip** ahead of us,” said Will. “Let’s swim slowly to save our **energy**.”

So we moved ahead at a **STEADY PACE**. As we swam, we could see more and more fish with faded colors.

“**Those poor fish!**” cried Violet.





“This world really is slowly disappearing,” said Colette.

“We can’t let it happen. We won’t!” Pam cried.

“That’s the spirit!” Will cheered.

We were more determined than ever to save Aquamarina. But before long we felt a **light current** pushing against us.

“This current is slowing us down!” Nicky remarked.

The current quickly got **STRONGER** — so strong that it was almost impossible to swim against.

“**I can’t go forward!**” Violet cried.

“Me neither!” said Pam.

We were all **struggling**. I looked around for something we could grab on to — a rock or an algae bush — but there was nothing around us except for **water**. In seconds, the

HEEEEEELP!



current would push us away from our goal.

**“LOOK THERE!”** Pam cried suddenly, pointing.

A **POD OF DOLPHINS** was swiftly swimming toward us.

“We’ve got to get out of their way,” said Paulina. “They might swim into us!”

**“I CAN’T MOVE,”**  
wailed Violet.





HEEEEEELP!

“This current is too strong!”

None of us could fight the **POWERFUL FORCE** of the current.

“The dolphins are getting closer!” Pam warned.

**What could we do?**

“These **DOLPHINS** might be just what we need!” Nicky cried. “They’re *friendly* animals. Maybe they’ll give us a ride!”

“Let’s give it a try!” I urged.

*It worked!*



HEEEEEELP!



When the dolphins swam by, we asked them for help. The friendly animals were happy to give us rides! We climbed onto their backs and took off.





# THE FIERCE BLACK CLAW CREW

“Thank you, dolphin friends,” I said after we had **JOURNEYED** across the Windy Channel.

“Happy to help!” said the dolphin who had given me a ride.

“*You are so kind,*” said Violet, giving a gentle pat to the dolphin who had carried her.

“You never would have managed it alone,” said the dolphin. “The Windy Channel has the strongest and most **DANGEROUS** current in the whole realm.”

“We noticed that!” I said.

“We have one more **favor** to ask, if you don’t mind,” said Will. “Could you please tell us how to find the Moving Dune?”



The dolphins shared a **worried** look. Then one of them **flicked** his tail to the left.

“It’s that way,” he **said**. “But to reach it, you have to cross **BLACK CLAW COVE**.”

“Is it dangerous?” I asked.

“It can be,” replied the dolphin. “It’s the territory of the **BLACK CLAW CREW**. They’re known for **robbing** travelers.”

“What’s the Black Claw Crew?” asked Colette.



“They’re fierce **PIRATES**,” the dolphin said. “You must be careful!”

“And there’s no other way to reach the **MOVING DUNE**?” Will asked.

The dolphin shook his head. “I’m afraid not.”

We said **good-bye** to the dolphins and swam toward the Moving Dune. The water became shallower, and the sand stretched out in front of us like an **underwater desert**.

“Let’s proceed carefully,” said Will. “The pirates could be anywhere.”

“We can get a better view from that **DUNE**,” Nicky said, nodding toward a hill of sand up ahead.

We swam to it and **PEERED** over the edge.

“Look! I see houses,” said Pam.



Violet gasped. “And there’s a **PIRATE SHIP!**”

The ship had **black** sails and a giant crustacean tail and claws. Three **BIG FISH** were tied to the ship with seaweed vines.

“This must be **BLACK CLAW COVE!**” Colette realized.

“It has to be,” said Paulina. “Look at the side of the ship. It says **CLAW OF THE DEEP.**”

“Do you think the **THIEF** we’re looking for is one of the pirates?” asked Nicky. “The dolphin told us they were **robbers.**”

“It’s possible,” I said. “That means the **Sea Violin** could be hidden around here somewhere.”

“Let’s look for it!” cried Pam, eager to take action.

“This could be **DANGEROUS,**” said Will.



Oh!

Look!





“Thea and I will go first. If it looks safe, we’ll signal you.”

“**Can’t I come with you?**” Pam asked.

“It’s better if the five of you stay here,” I said, agreeing with Will.

The mouselets looked **disappointed**.

“Don’t **worry**,” I reassured them. “You’ll get a chance to explore.”

So Will and I swam down into Black Claw Cove while the mouselets hid and waited. It was **EERILY** quiet.

We had no idea if danger awaited us — but we knew we couldn’t **back down** now!



# SURPRISE ATTACK!

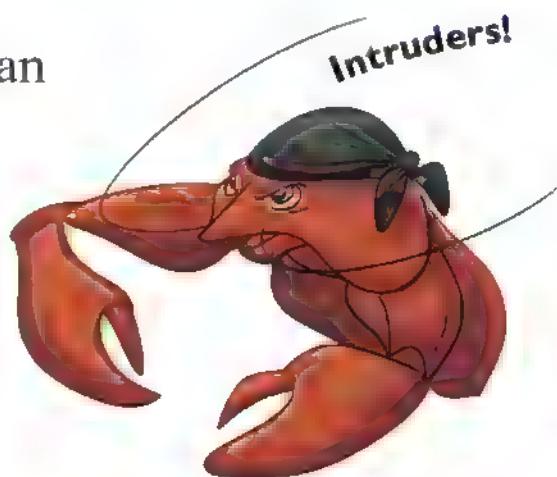
“Let’s head for the ship,” I whispered as we swam into the cove. “Maybe the Sea Violin is **hidden** there.”

Will nodded and we swam toward the **CLAW OF THE DEEP**. Suddenly, I felt someone tap on my shoulder.

Startled, I turned to see a **LOBSTER** wearing a pirate’s black bandanna!

“**INTRUDERS!**” yelled the lobster. “**CRPTURE THEM, CREW!**”

A **CRAB** wearing an eye patch quickly appeared, followed by a **PRAWN** wearing a bandanna.





## SURPRISE ATTACK!

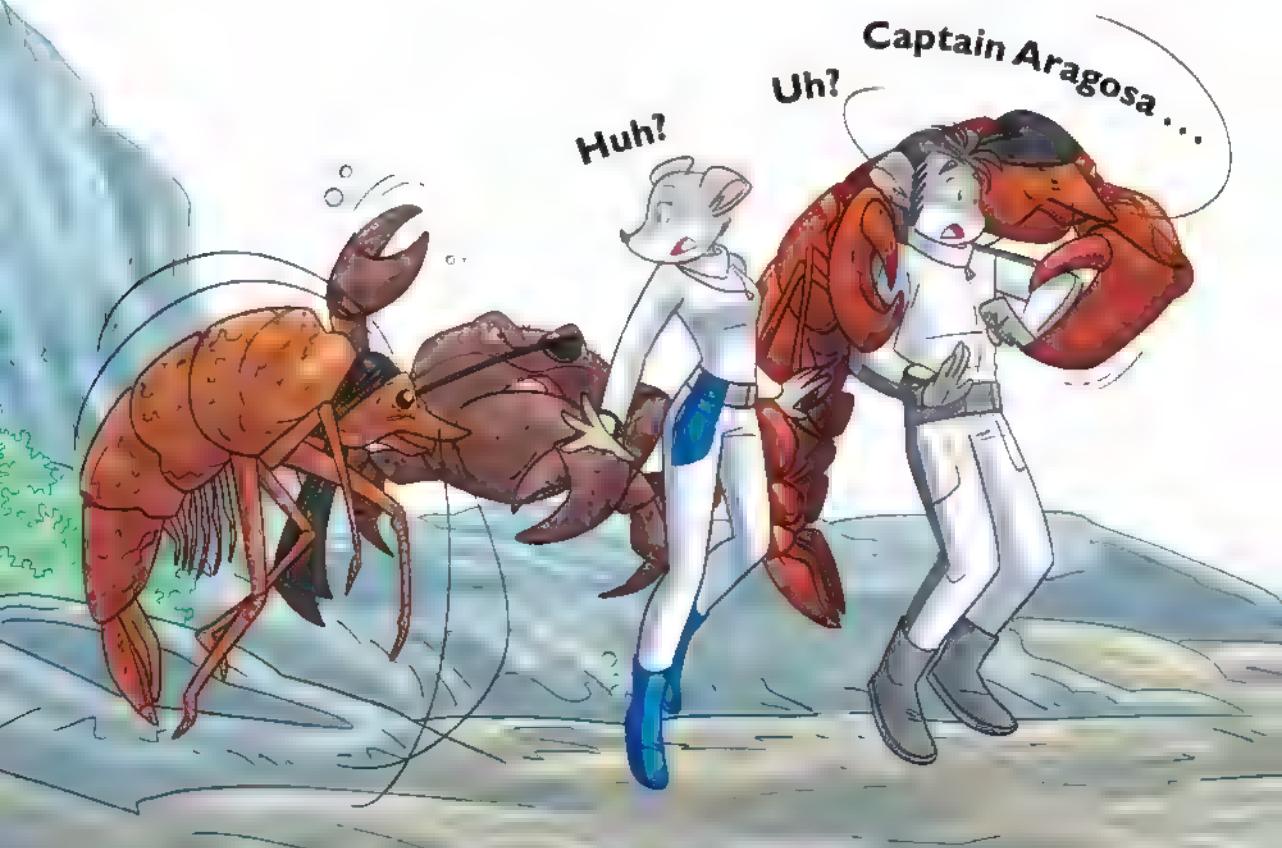
“**SHIVER ME SEASHELLS!**” cried the crab. “I’ll bet you a **barrel of algae** that they’re here to steal our gold.”

“Well, I’ll bet you **TWO BARRELS!**” said the lobster.

“**THREE BARRELS!**” cried the prawn.

A woman’s voice broke through the arguing.

“What’s going on here?”





The crustaceans stood at attention.  
**“CAPTAIN ARAGOSA!”**

“Who are these **intruders**?” asked the woman. She had long black hair. She carried a **SWORD** and wore a pirate’s hat. “Have you questioned them?”

“I was about to when Crabby challenged me,” said the lobster.

The pirate captain sighed. “Do I have to do

What's going on?





everything myself?" she asked.

**"Yes, Captain!"** the pirates shouted.

Aragosa shook her head and turned to us. "I'm sure you two have a **good reason** for coming here. Don't they, crew?"

**"Yes, Captain!"** the pirates cried.

Will smiled at her. "We are **very sorry** to disturb you, Captain," he said.

Aragosa raised an eyebrow. "You can try to **sweet talk** me, but it won't save you."

**"Aye, Captain!"** exclaimed the pirates.

She glared at them. "Shut your traps and seize them!"

The lobster wrapped his claws around Will, and the prawn grabbed me.

Aragosa smiled at us. "I am **CAPTAIN ARAGOSA**, leader of the Black Claw Crew. We do not allow intruders in our territory. You both are now our **prisoners!**"



The pirates couldn't help themselves.  
“**HOORAY FOR ARAGOSA!**” they cheered.  
Will and I exchanged **worried** glances.  
Being **CAPTURED BY PIRATES** wasn't part of  
our plan!

“Please, Captain,” I said. “Before you take  
us **prisoner**, you should at least find out  
who we are and why we are here.”



Aragosa **sneered** at me. “If it’s so important to you, stranger, then **speak!**”

“My name is Thea Stilton, and this is Will Mystery,” I began. “We’ve come from very **far away**, because we learned that Aquamarina is in danger. We need to find the Sea Violin so we can save your land!”

To our surprise, Aragosa burst out **laughing**. “And you came to find the Sea Violin here? What would we want with such a **worthless** object?”

“It is far from **worthless**,” said Will. “Queen Anemone must play it every night to produce the **magic** that keeps your world alive.”

“Queen Anemone, eh?” said the pirate captain thoughtfully. “If we find it ourselves, we can demand a **HANDSOME RANSOM** from her!”

“**Great idea, Captain!**” said the pirates.

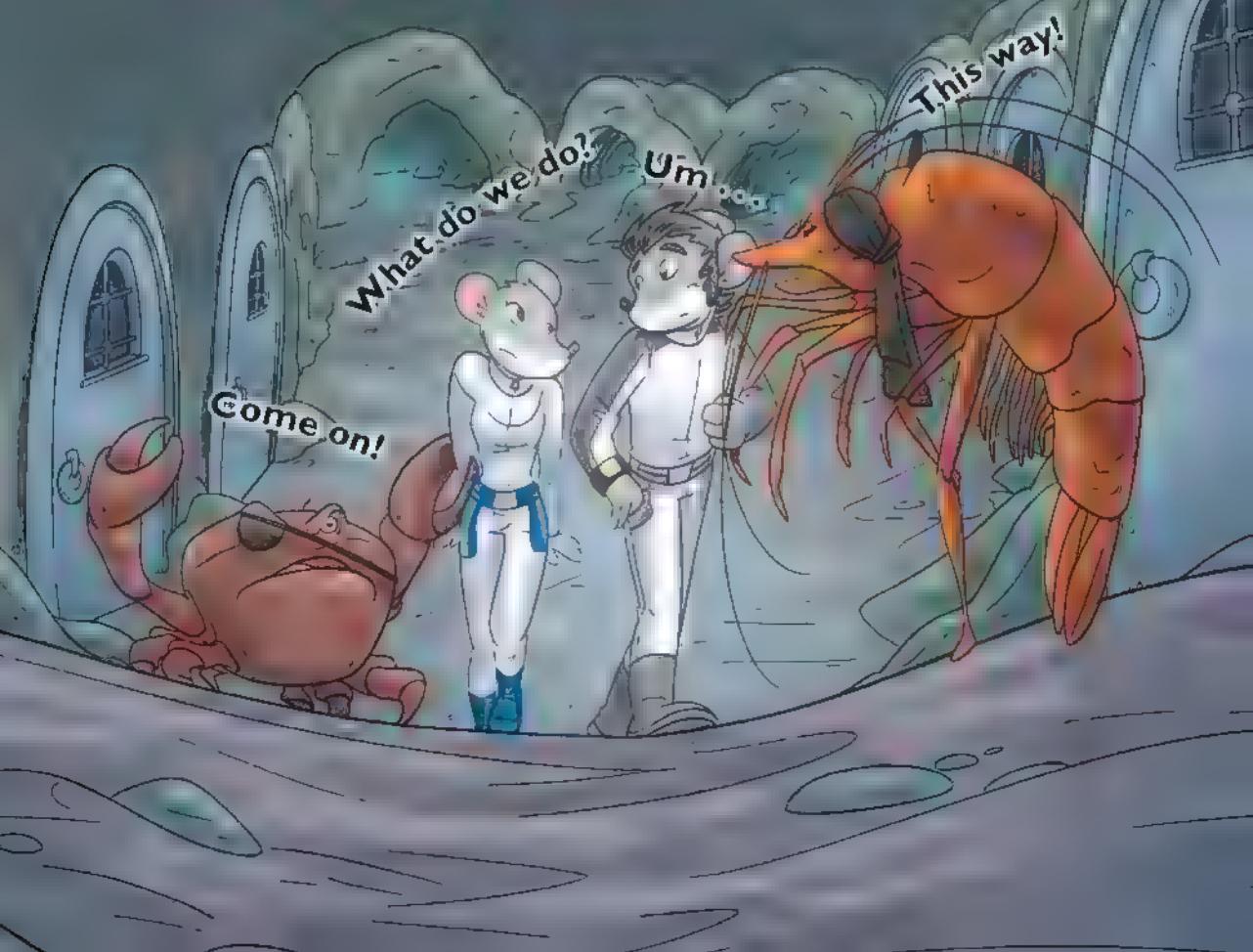


"We'll take on the royal guard if we must," said Aragosa.

"**Brilliant, Captain!**" the pirates cheered.

"Stop your compliments and let me think," said Aragosa. "Lock up these two... while I figure out our next move."

"**Come on!**"



The pirates pushed us through a long tunnel in the sand. Below the ground was a **labyrinth** of rooms and hallways!

They led us to a cell with a **rusty** iron door.

“I think they’ll be **comfortable** here, Shelly,” Crabby said to the prawn.

“That’s right,” Shelly said, glaring at us. “And don’t you two try to **ESCAPE**. It’s impossible!”

Then they **PUSHED** us into the cell and closed the **HEAVY** door behind us.

Will and I frowned at each other.

“Well, this is a **pickle** we’re in,” Will said.

I nodded. “Definitely. We need to find a way to **GET OUT!**”

The thick iron door looked **IMPOSSIBLE** to break through. But we had to try!



## LET'S DO SOMETHING!

Meanwhile, the **THEA SISTERS** were starting to worry about me and Will.

“It’s been a half hour, and they aren’t back yet,” Pam said.

“Do you think they’re in **trouble**?” asked Violet.

“**I DO**,” said Colette. “We need to do something!”

“We should swim to the **PIRATES'** cove and look for them,” Nicky suggested.

“That’s a good idea, but we need a **PLAN**,” Paulina said. “They might have been **captured**. We don’t want to end up in the pirates’ clutches, too.”

“You’re right,” Violet agreed.



“So what’s our plan, then?” asked Nicky.

Colette looked **thoughtful**. “Maybe we could get the pirates to leave the cove first.”

“How could we do that?” asked Pam.

“There must be a way to get them to board their ship and **sail away** from here,” Colette replied. “We just need to **think**.”

Suddenly, Nicky cried out. “Look over there! It’s the dolphins!”



The same pod of **DOLPHINS** that we’d met before was swimming toward them.

“Maybe they’ll **HELP** us again,” Violet said.

Colette nodded. “I think I have a plan.”

She swam to the dolphins



and explained her idea.

“Sure, we’d be **happy** to help you,” one of the dolphins replied.

“That’s why we returned — to make sure you were okay,” another said.

Colette hugged him. *“Thank you so much!”*

The two dolphins swam into the middle of the cove and spoke **LOUDLY** enough for any hidden pirates to hear.

“It **SANK** with all its cargo? Are you sure?” the first dolphin asked.

“Yes, Long Fin saw it with his own eyes,” said the second dolphin. “The ship **wrecked** not far from the Windy Channel.”

“What was the ship carrying? Jewels?” asked the first.

“**Jewels and gold**,” replied the second. “A ton of **TREASURE**.”



Then they swam away. Crabby and Shelly **peeked** out of a hole in the sand.

“Did you hear that, Crabby?” asked Shelly.

“I sure did, Shelly,” - Crabby replied.

“We’ve got to tell **ARAGOSA** right away!”

said Shelly. “I’m already **DROOLING** at the thought of all that gold.”

“**QUICK!** Let’s go find her!” Crabby said. They **hurried** off to tell their captain about the treasure.

Back at the dune, the **dolphins** filled in the **THEA SISTERS**.

“I’m sure they heard us,” said the first dolphin.

“I saw the sand move right near us,” said



the second. "Those crustaceans

"So they bought the story  
about the shipwreck and  
the ~~treasure~~ ~~gold~~ ~~gold~~  
Pam.

The first dolphin

~~said,~~ "They went home.  
~~We told a good story.~~"

"Let's hope they  
decide to check it  
out," said Colette.



## LET'S DO SOMETHING!

“No **PIRATE** can resist treasure!” the second dolphin assured her.

Soon the crustacean pirates appeared, scurrying onto the **CLAW OF THE DEEP**. Then Captain Aragosa walked onto the ship.

“Who’s that?” asked Violet. (The Thea Sisters were seeing her for the first time.)

“Captain Aragosa, leader of the Black Claw Crew,” answered the dolphin. “She is a **clever** and **FEARSOME** pirate.”





Aragosa might be clever, but she fell for Colette's trick. The pirate ship **sailed away** from the cove in search of the shipwreck!

"Thank you, dolphin friends!" said Violet. "We'd do anything to **save our world**," one of them replied.

"Now let's go find Will and Thea!" urged Colette.





The Thea Sisters **quickly** swam into the cove.

“Could they have **locked up** Will and Thea in a **PRISON** somewhere?” Nicky wondered.

Then Paulina spotted a tunnel in the sand. “Maybe they’re **down** here!”

The Thea Sisters dove **into** the tunnel and swam through the undersea **labyrinth**. They quickly reached the hallway full of **IRON DOORS**.

“These look like prison cells,” Colette remarked.

**“Will! Thea!”** they all called out.

Will and I were so happy to hear their voices.

**“WE’RE HERE! WE’RE LOCKED INSIDE!”**  
we shouted in reply.



# A PRISONER MADE OF GOLD

“Thea? Will? Let us know WHICH DOOR you’re behind!” Paulina shouted.

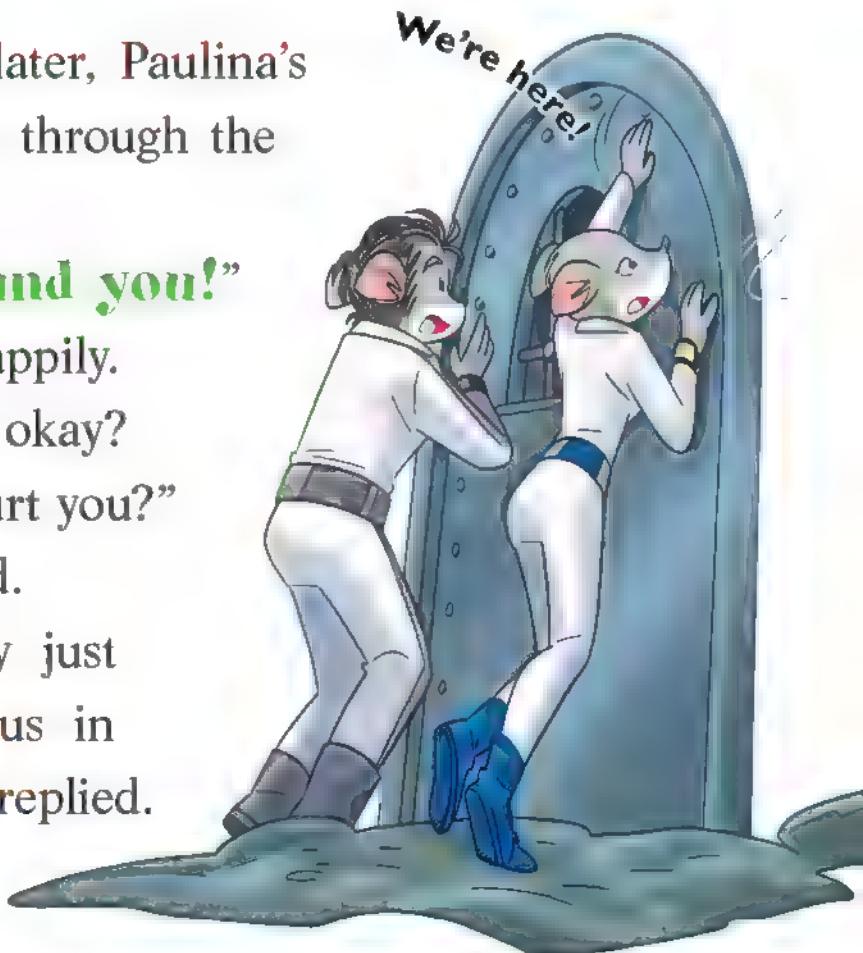
“**WE’RE HERE!**” I yelled, pounding on the door.

Seconds later, Paulina’s face peered through the bars.

“**We found you!**” she cried happily.

“Are you okay? Did they hurt you?” Violet asked.

“No, they just **LOCKED** us in here,” Will replied.





“Is there a **Key** out there?” I asked.

“We’ll find it,” Pam said confidently.

The Thea Sisters swam up and down the row of cells.

“I don’t **SEE** a key,” Paulina reported.

“Me neither!” the others chimed in.

Colette pulled a **PIN** out of her hair. “Maybe this will work,” she said. She stuck it into the lock and **jiggled** it. Then she frowned. “No luck.”

“I hope the **PIRATES** didn’t take it with them,” Violet fretted.

“They’re gone?” I asked.

“Yes, thanks to a little **trick**,” Colette replied. “We can explain later — but we need to get you out of here.”

“Where is that **Key**?” Pam wondered.

Suddenly, an unfamiliar voice spoke up.

“The key that opens all the cells is **hidden**



in the keyhole of the first door on the left.”

“Who said that?” Colette asked.

“I did,” replied the voice. “Third cell on the right.”

The mouselets went to the cell and **LOOKED** through the bars. A **glimmering** fish swam up to them.

“Who are you?” asked Paulina.

“I am the **Golden Fish**,” he replied.

“Are you made of gold?” Pam asked.

“Yes, my scales are,” the fish replied.

“Amazing!” cried Colette.

“Is that why the **PIRATES** have locked you in this cell?”

“Yes, they wanted to take my **golden scales**,” the fish replied. “But they realized that as soon as you touch them,





they become just like any other fish scales.”

“*Good thing!*” Pam cried.

“So why didn’t they let you go?” Nicky asked.

“They were **convinced** they could find a way to take my scales without them changing,” the fish answered.

“We’ll get you out of here!” Paulina promised.

She rushed to get the key, right where the fish had said it was. Then she **FREED** us all.

“Thank you, agents! You have done **GREAT WORK**, as always,” Will praised them.

I hugged them. “Thank you! I didn’t enjoy being locked up.”

“I’m so glad we found you and got you out of there,” Paulina said tearfully.

I turned to the Golden Fish. “**Thank you** for helping us, too.”



“It is I who must thank you,” the fish said. “If you hadn’t arrived, I might have been in that **CELL** for a long time.”

“We were **happy** to help you,” said Colette.

“Um, this is a nice **reunion**, but those





**PIRATES** could return at any time," Pam reminded us.

"Right. Once those pirates realize they've been **tricked**, they won't be in a good mood," Nicky said.

"We should **HURRY**," the Golden Fish agreed.

"By the way, how did you get the pirates to leave the cove?" Will asked.

The Thea Sisters told their **story** as we swam quickly through the underground labyrinth back into the cove.

"Where are you all headed?" the Golden Fish asked us.

"To the **MOVING DUNE**," I replied.  
"Do you know it?"

"Of course! That's where I lived before I was captured," the fish replied.

"Then we are **twice as lucky** that we



met you,” Paulina said.

“Why are you going there?” asked the fish.

“We’re looking for someone,” said Colette.  
“A **THIEF**, actually.”

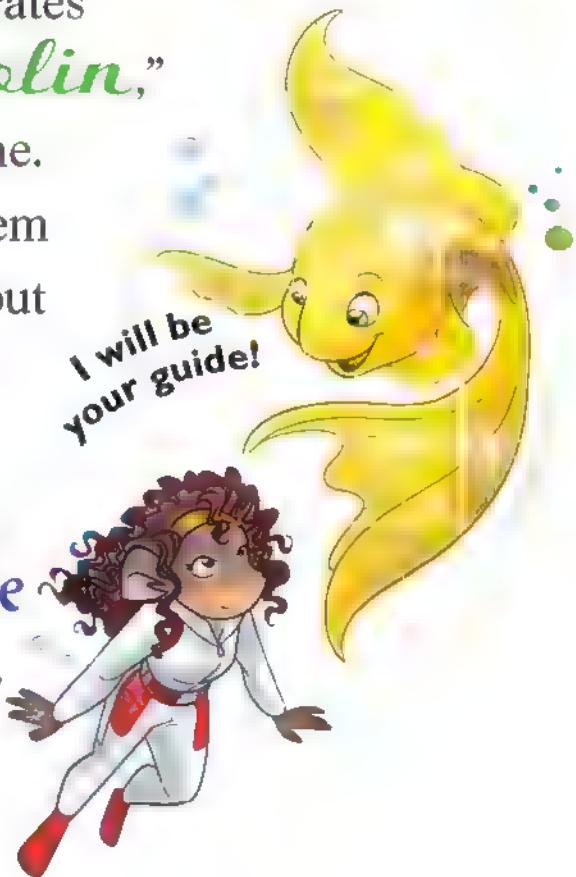
The Golden Fish looked surprised. “A thief? You mean, like the pirates?”

“We asked the pirates about the **Sea Violin**,” Will informed everyone.

“But they didn’t seem to know anything about it, and I **believe** them,” I added.

The fish’s eyes got wide. “Someone **stole** the Sea Violin? Why, that’s terrible!”

Paulina nodded.  
“Yes, it is. Without





its **MUSIC**, this land will fade away forever.”

“I know,” said the fish sadly. “Let me be your **guide** to the Moving Dune. I will take you to the lord of the area — the **COBALT HERMIT CRAB**.”

“A **BLUE** hermit crab?” asked Violet.

The fish nodded. “He’s not the **nicest** creature in the sea, but he might be able to help you,” he said.

“Thank you, Golden Fish!” I said. “Time is running out, and the **FUTURE OF AQUAMARINA** is at stake.”

“We must all be brave,” the fish said. “There is a lot of **OCEAN** to cross before we reach the Moving Dune. Follow me!”



# THE LORD OF THE MOVING DUNE

“Do you think the Black Claw Crew will ***FOLLOW*** us all the way to the Moving Dune?” Paulina asked the Golden Fish.

“No — it’s ***BEYOND*** their territory,” answered the fish. “They never venture into this area for ***fear*** of the Cobalt Hermit Crab.”

“Wait, you mean pirates are afraid of this crab?” Pam asked. “He sounds ***SCARY***.”

“He can be, but you all seem ***very courageous*** to me,” the fish told her. “We’ll be there soon. The ***MOVING DUNE*** is just past that cluster of rocks.”

We swam past the rocks, and a ***marvelous*** landscape appeared before our eyes.



We're  
here!

What a sight!



Is this the Moving Dune?

Wow!



“How **beautiful!**” Nicky cried.

“Yes. It’s my home and I love it very much,” said the fish.

“What is that **DIG BHELL?**” asked Colette, pointing to a shell as large as a small house.

“That is the **Seashell Palace**, home of the Cobalt Hermit Crab,” he answered. “We’re just about there.”

We swam toward the big shell. As we got closer, we saw that the surface was **smooth** and shiny. Light **glowed** through round windows.

The Golden Fish opened the gate and motioned for us to proceed. We passed through a **garden** and entered the house. Inside, we saw piles of seashells in different shapes, sizes, and **colors**.

“The Cobalt Hermit Crab adores seashells,”



Ooooh...

How lovely!

Look at  
all the colors!

Wow!



explained the fish. “He **COLLECTS** every one that he finds.”

“They’re pretty, but it’s kind of a **MESS** in here,” remarked Violet.

“Yes,” Colette agreed. “He really should be more **organized**.”

“Follow me. His rooms are this way,” the Golden Fish instructed.

We traveled through the **seashell**, which had many small rooms. Finally, we arrived in a **grand** room filled with more piles of seashells — and one big, **BLUE** hermit crab with a bright **BLUE** shell.

“Good day, my lord,” the Golden Fish said politely.

The hermit crab stared at the fish with **beady** black eyes. “Golden Fish, it’s you! Where have you been hiding?”

“I was **CAPTURED** by the Black Claw



Crew, but these friends saved me,” he explained, motioning to us.

The hermit crab looked at us **curiously**. “Thank you,” he said.

“It was our pleasure to help the Golden Fish,” Will replied.

“I see,” said the hermit crab. “And now I suppose you want a **reward**?”

“It’s not like that –” Will started to explain, but the hermit crab interrupted him.

“Of course it is!” he snapped. “Everything has a price.”

“We were on our way to **SEE** you when we met the Golden Fish,” I said. “We need some information from you.”



“What information?” the hermit crab asked.

“We are searching for a **THIEF**, and the Blue Pearl told us to look here, at the Moving Dune,” I explained. “This thief has taken something very important to Aquamarina: the **Sea Violin**.”

“You seem very **wise**, my lord,” said Will. “Surely you can help us.”

The Cobalt Hermit Crab was **silent** for a moment. Then he looked right at us.

“It’s true. Someone here at the **MOVING DUNE** has taken the Sea Violin.”

“Then you know who it is?” Colette asked.

He nodded.

**“I DO KNOW.  
IT WAS ME!”**

A shocked silence fell over the room.



## A VERY CRANKY CRAB

We all stared at the hermit crab. Had he really just **admitted** to being the thief?

Pam spoke up first. “Maybe we didn’t **understand** you correctly . . .”

“You understood perfectly,” snapped the hermit crab, annoyed. “It was I who took the **Sea Violin**.”

“But why?” Violet asked.

“**NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS**,” the hermit crab said.

“But it is our business,” I protested. “It is the business of every creature in this realm — a realm that is in danger of **disappearing** because of you!”

“How can you behave like this? Don’t you



## A VERY CRANKY CRAB

have a **heart**?" Violet scolded him.

"It is because of my **heart** that I stole the violin," said the crab. "And **that** is all that I will say. Now please **STOP** asking me about it!"

"Please calm down," I said. "We won't ask about your motives anymore. But you must understand that the realm is in **great danger**. Can you please give the **violin** back to us?"





“I’m afraid that’s not **Possible**,” the crab replied.

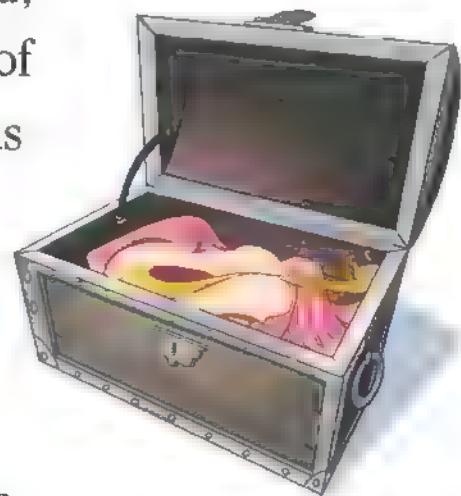
“Why not?” Pam asked.

“Because the **Sea Violin** isn’t here. At least, not all of it,” he said.

“What do you mean?” Nicky asked.

“See for yourself,” the hermit crab replied with a **Mysterious** smile. He pointed to a **Mother-of-pearl** trunk at the back of the room. We rushed to open it, and as soon as we lifted the heavy lid, we saw the seashell body of the Sea Violin. It was wrapped in a piece of fine **silk**.

Violet picked it up and carefully unwrapped it. “**It has no strings!**” she cried. “It can’t play the Music of the Sea!”





**“You did this!”** Colette squeaked angrily at the crab.

He motioned for us to follow him. He led us up a **narrow** spiral staircase and then out onto a terrace on top of the Royal Seashell.

“As you have seen, the body of the violin is here, **safe and sound**,” he said. “However, the **four strings** have been hidden in different parts of the realm.”

**“You separated them on purpose!”**  
Pam cried.

“Of course. It was the **only** way I could guarantee never having to hear the violin played again,” he said.

“But that has put the realm in **TERRIBLE DANGER!**” I reminded him.

The hermit crab considered this. “Very well. I will give you the violin if you can retrieve all four strings,” he said. Then he



The strings are in different parts of the realm.

But...

What now?



“The second string is in Sirens’ Bay, home of the **Emerald Sirens**,” the hermit crab continued.

“**A DRAGON!** Squeak!” Pam cried.

“The second string is in Sirens’ Bay, home of the **Emerald Sirens**,” the hermit crab continued.

“They sound less **SCARY** than a dragon,” Nicky remarked.

chuckled.

“What’s so **funny?**” Pam asked.

“It will not be **easy** to take the





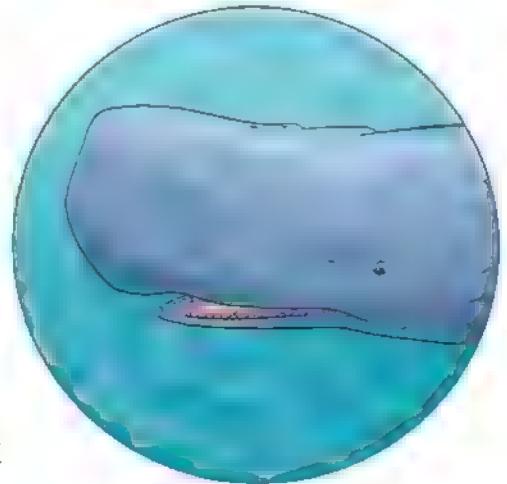
“Only in appearance,” the Golden Fish chimed in. “The Emerald Sirens will **IMPRISON** anyone who listens to their magical song.”

“Then we must be just as **careful** of them,” I said.

The hermit crab continued. “The third string is located in the Sludge Pits, home of **Calamario**. He’s a very unpleasant giant squid.”

The Golden Fish nodded. “That’s true!”

“And the final string is guarded by **COLOSSUS**, a huge whale,” the hermit





crab explained. “The string is kept inside her **gigantic** belly!”

“Colossus is **truly** massive,” agreed the Golden Fish. “No creature that has been swept into her mouth has ever escaped.”

“So we’ve got to face a dragon, sirens, a **NASTY** squid, and a giant whale,” Colette repeated in a worried voice.

The Cobalt Hermit Crab **impatiently** clicked his claws. “You know what you must do. I have nothing further to say. If you manage to gather all **four strings**, I will see you here again. If not, farewell.”

Then he scuttled back inside. We left his palace feeling very **discouraged**.

“I can’t believe what that hermit crab did!” Colette exclaimed. “What would make him hate the **MUSIC** of the violin so much?”

“He’s always been very **cranky**, but I



never thought he could do anything so terrible,” said the Golden Fish. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s not your fault,” I said. “And we’re **grateful** to you for bringing us here. At least now we have a chance of getting the Sea Violin back to **Queen Anemone**.”

“I’m afraid it won’t be easy,” the fish said.

“We can do it,” Colette promised him. “We don’t want your realm to disappear!”

“Thank you. Every **CREATURE** here will be in your debt,” the fish replied.

Paulina opened the **MAP** of Aquamarina. “Let’s see where we need to go.”

The fish pointed out the four locations.

“But they’re so far apart!” Pam cried.

“We’ll have to **split up**,” said Will.

“I think that might be the best solution,” I agreed.

Just then a school of fish passed by. Half of



their scales were **brightly colored**, but the other half had faded.

“Those poor fish,” said Violet sadly.

“This is all because of that **COBALT HERMIT CRAB**,” said Paulina. “How could he be so **cruel**?”

“Let’s not judge him too quickly,” I said. “We don’t really know him.”

“He is a very **MYSTEROUS** creature,” the Golden Fish added. “None of us know where he came from. One day, he just appeared and started building his palace.”

“The **Eel of Ages** also said there was a mystery surrounding him,” Colette remembered.

“The **important** thing now is to find those four strings,” Will reminded us.

“I’ll take the **DRAGON** and the **SQUID**,” I said. “Who wants to come with me?”



Pam and Violet quickly raised their paws.  
**“We’ll go!”**

“Excellent!” said Will. “Then Paulina, Colette, Nicky, and I will go find the **Emerald Sirens** and the giant whale.”

We thanked the **Golden Fish** for his help. Then we split into groups. Splitting up always makes me a little **nervous**, but I knew that our **time** was running out.

“Good luck!” I said to Will. “I hope we’ll meet back here soon, with all **four strings** of the Sea Violin!”





# THE WRATH OF SALEDOR

“How are we supposed to get the string back from a **FIERCE DRAGON?**” Violet asked as we swam toward Saledor’s Cave.

“We just need to have **FAITH**,” I told her. “We’ve come this far, haven’t we?”

“Maybe he won’t be *that* fierce,” Pam said hopefully.

Soon we came to the entrance of a **dark** cave.

“This is it,” said Pam. “I think I can see him inside.”

We heard some odd, **SHRILL** noises.

“Is that music?” Violet wondered.

Then a voice thundered from inside the cave. **“WHO GOES THERE?”**





“We’d better go in,” I told Pam and Violet, and we swam through a **tunnel** into the cave.

The dragon’s **green** eyes flashed when





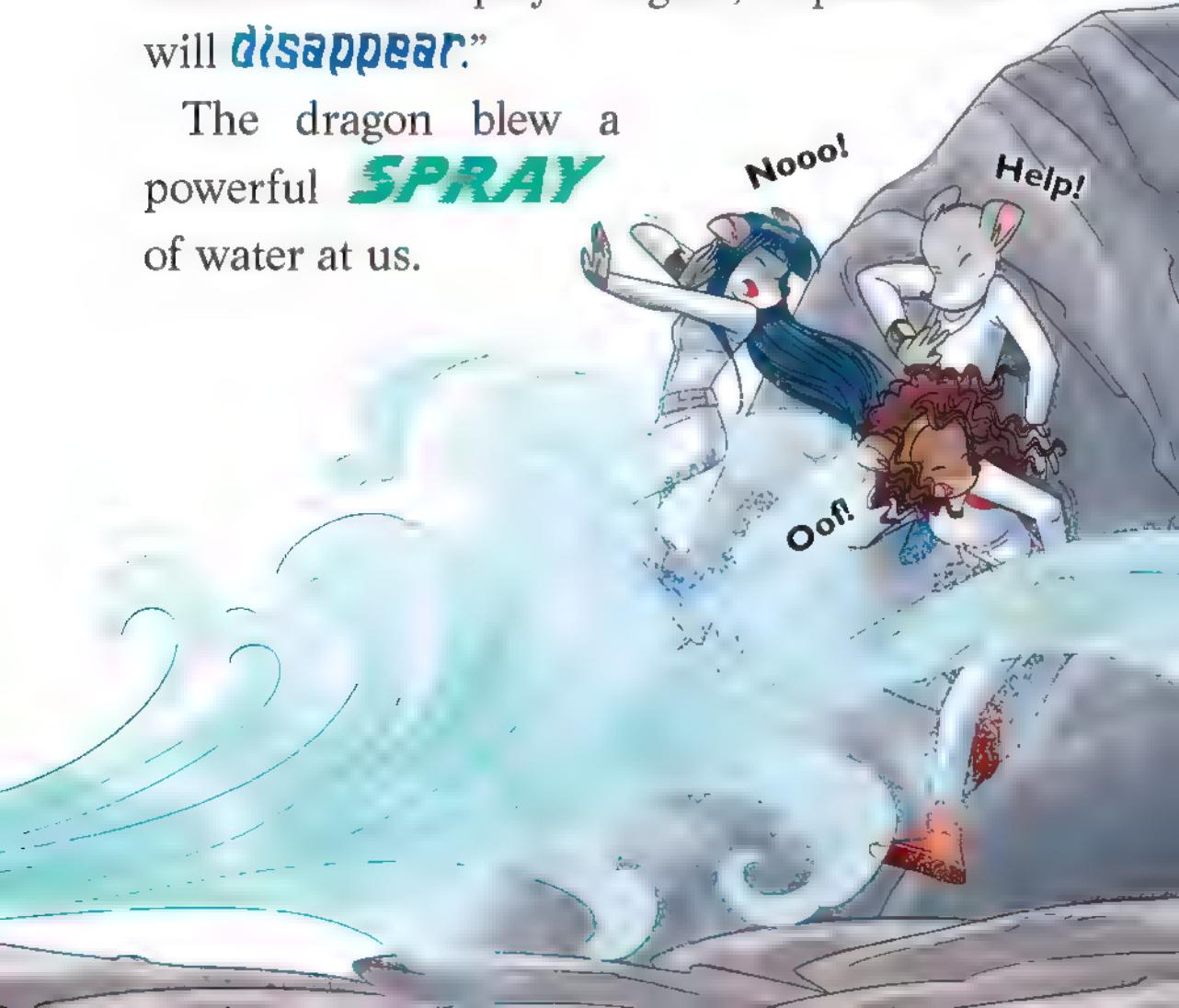
he saw us. He turned and faced us.

**“WHAT DO YOU WANT?”** he asked.

“We’ve come to ask you for the **string** of the Sea Violin,” Pam said.

“The future of this realm depends on the **Sea Violin!**” I called out. “If Queen Anemone can’t play it again, Aquamarina will **disappear.**”

The dragon blew a powerful **SPRAY** of water at us.





“Ahhhhh!” we shouted, ducking the blast.  
“Now leave! Or **YOU’LL BE SORRY!**”  
Saledor threatened.

“We’re not leaving without the **string**,”  
Pam said bravely.

**“THEN YOU SHALL FEEL MY WRATH!”**  
the dragon cried, thrashing his long tail.

Violet jumped between Pam and Saledor.  
“Wait!”

“Do you dare to **challenge** me, too?” the  
dragon asked.

Violet looked Saledor right in the eye.  
“Were you playing a **violin** before?”

“What if I was?” he asked.  
“Are you using the **string** for your violin?”  
Violet asked.

“It’s none of your business,” Saledor  
replied.

Violet didn’t give up. “I also play the violin.”





The dragon looked **interested**. “You?”

Violet nodded. “Yes. And I can **teach** you, if you like. Will you show me your instrument?”

Saledor’s eyes narrowed. “I don’t **trust** you!”

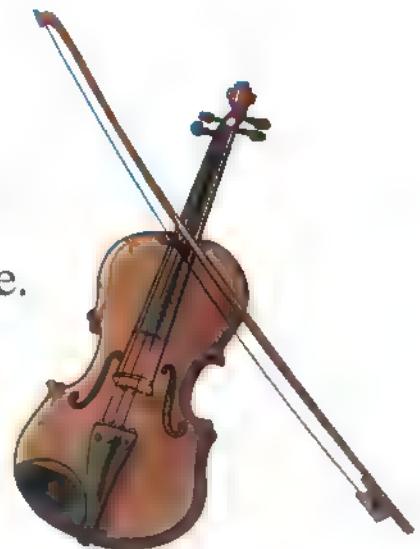
“I **promise** that I will be careful,” Violet said, smiling. “I just want to see it.”

“If you try to steal it, I shall **BLAST** you!” Saledor said.

“I know,” Violet said. “That’s why you can **trust** me.”

The dragon seemed **satisfied** and lumbered deeper into his cave. He returned with a violin and a bow.

Violet held it. “It’s a **beautiful** instrument,” she said. “But the string from





the Sea Violin doesn't belong with the others. It's causing you **trouble**. If you have the original, I'll show you **what I mean**."

The dragon looked **doubtful**, but he retrieved the original string and gave it to Violet. She replaced the Sea Violin string with it and then played a **SWEET MELODY**.

"That was **wonderful**," he said.  
"How do you do it?"

"I'll show you," said Violet. She helped Saledor properly hold the violin and bow.

"Now give it a try," she said.

Saledor **delicately** moved the bow, and a **pretty note** sounded from the violin.

"It works!" he cried, pleased. "Thank you. The **string** from the Sea Violin is yours."



# CALAMARIO OF THE SLUDGE PITS

“You were **amazing**, Vi!” Pam said, once we had left Saledor’s cave. “Not only did you face a **FIERCE** dragon, but you figured out how to get the string from him!”

“Poor thing,” Violet said. “He thought the string from the **Sea Violin** would help him play better. But now he knows.”

“One string down, one to go from Calamario,” I said.

“The giant squid from the Sludge Pits!” Pam remembered.

“That doesn’t sound like a very **nice place**,” Violet said.

“But how bad is a **SLUDGY SQUID** when you’ve taken down a dragon?” Pam teased.



I had entered the **location** of the Sludge Pits into my wrist computer, and I checked it.

“We need to head **NORTH**,” I said.

“To the **Sludge Pits**!” Pam cheered.

After we swam for a while, we noticed that the ocean floor beneath us was no longer **PALE** sand. It now looked like a **GREENISH**, **BROWNISH** slush.

“Let me guess,” said Pam. “We’ve reached the Sludge Pits.”

Violet held her nose. “It **smells** terrible!”

I watched the sludge. **BUBBLES** floated up to the surface and burst, releasing a **rotten** odor.

“What kind of a squid would live in a **stinky** place like this?” Pam wondered.

After she spoke, the sludge started to bubble **furiously**. The pointy head of a



giant squid emerged from the slime!

“Who has entered my Sludge Pits?” the squid asked, staring at us with his enormous **BLACK EYES**.

“It must be Calamario!” Violet murmured.

We **quickly** stepped back, expecting him to lash out and **ATTACK** us. But Calamario just kept staring at us.

“Are you Calamario?” I asked.





## CALAMARIO OF THE SLUDGE PITS

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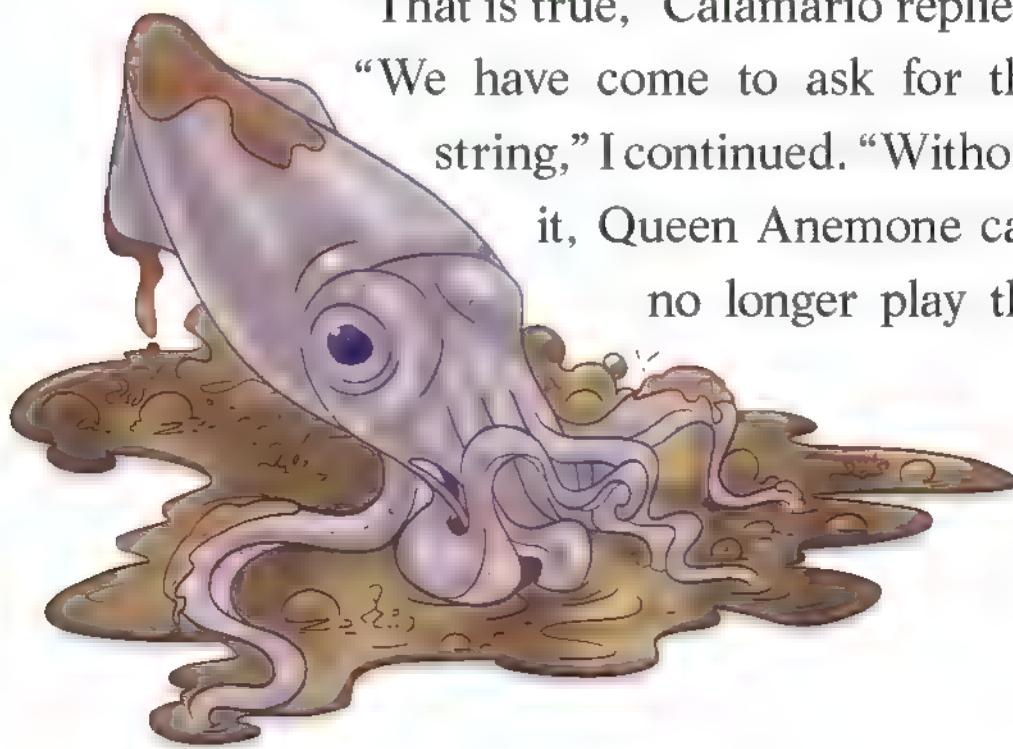
“Yes I am,” he replied. “But **who ARE YOU** and what do you want?”

He had fully emerged from the sludge, and his long arms were **wriggling** very close to us.

“Our names are Thea, Violet, and Pam, and we are here to ask for your **help**,” I replied. “We know that the Cobalt Hermit Crab has **entrusted** you with one of the strings for the Sea Violin.”

“That is true,” Calamario replied.

“We have come to ask for the string,” I continued. “Without it, Queen Anemone can no longer play the





**Music of the Sea**, which is causing Aquamarina to disappear. Soon it will **fade away** forever.”

“YOU CAN’T HAVE THE STRING!” the squid snapped.

“Why not?” Pam asked, shocked.

“Please, you must **help** save Aquamarina!” Violet pleaded.

But the squid childishly **SMACKED** his arms into the sludge, sending the **STINKY SLIME** spraying all over us.

“You are not very nice!” Violet said, wiping off her face.

“And you are **pests**,” snapped the giant squid. “Now I’m going back to my nap. When I wake up again, I don’t want to see you here. Understand?”

“I’m afraid not!” Pam replied.

The squid **FROZE**. “What did you say?”



“I said, we are **NOT** leaving here without the string,” Pam said firmly.

Calamario pulled his entire body out of the mud and swam toward Pam. She **BRAVELY** stood her ground.

The squid looked at her with his **LARGE EYES**. “You have courage. This *pleases* me. So I will give you all the chance to win the string from me, if you can pass a test.”

“What kind of test?” Pam asked.

“**A TEST OF STRENGTH**,” the squid answered.

“That’s not fair,” Violet protested. “You

*We’re not leaving!*





are much **LARGER** and **STRONGER** than we are!"

"We will wager the string from the Sea Violin in a **TUG-OF-WAR** over this sludge puddle," Calamario explained. "**One** of my arms against all **Six** of yours."

"We can't accept," Violet whispered to me and Pam. "If we fall into the **sludge**, we'll be stuck."

"We can do it!" Pam said confidently. "It's three against one."

"Besides, this is our **only chance** to get the string," I pointed out.

I turned to Calamario. "We accept your challenge!"

The squid picked up a long **rope** of braided algae and gave us one end, taking the other in one of his arms.

**BEGIN!**" he yelled, and we began to



## CALAMARIO OF THE SLUDGE PITS

pull on the rope with all of our might.

Calamario's arm was **VERY STRONG**. We held our ground. After a few minutes, though, we began to **lose energy**.

"Thea, he's too strong. We're going to lose this," Pam whispered to me.

"I have a plan," I said. "I'll count to three, and we'll all **loosen** our grip so he thinks we've given up. Then we'll give a **STRONG TUG** with all of our strength."





Pam and Violet nodded, and I softly counted.

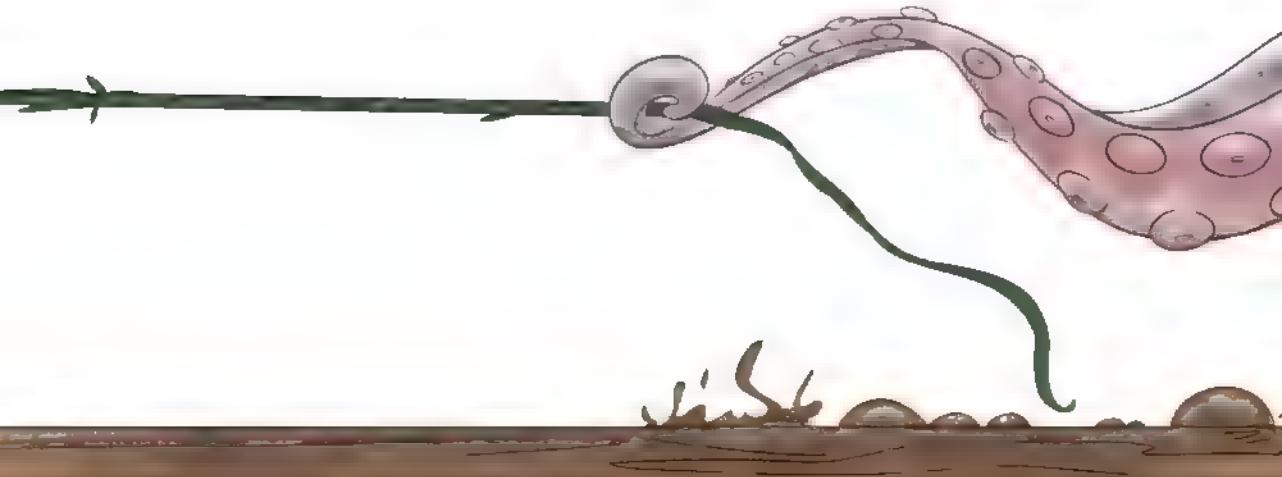
**"one . . . two . . . THREE!"**

We all stopped pulling so hard. Calamario thought he was winning, so he stopped pulling, too. Then we **YANKED** the rope with all the strength we had left.

**Splash!** Calamario tumbled into the puddle of the sludge. **WE HAD WON!**

"Fine. The string of the Sea Violin is **yours**," he grumbled, climbing out to give it to **us**.

We accepted it, thanked him, and then swam back toward the Cobalt Hermit Crab.





# BEWARE THE SIRENS' TRICKS!

We returned to the Moving Dune as quickly as we could, **happy** to have retrieved the two violin strings. At the same time, Will, Nicky, Colette, and Paulina were **finally** reaching their first destination, Sirens' Bay.

“I wonder what the **Emerald Sirens** will be like,” Colette said.

“The Golden Fish made them sound **very DANGEROUS**,” said Paulina.

“Look! I think we’re here!” Nicky cried, pointing ahead.

Before them was a pretty village filled with houses decorated with **colorful** seashells.

“Let’s approach slowly,” Will said. “If they start **SINGING**, cover your ears!”

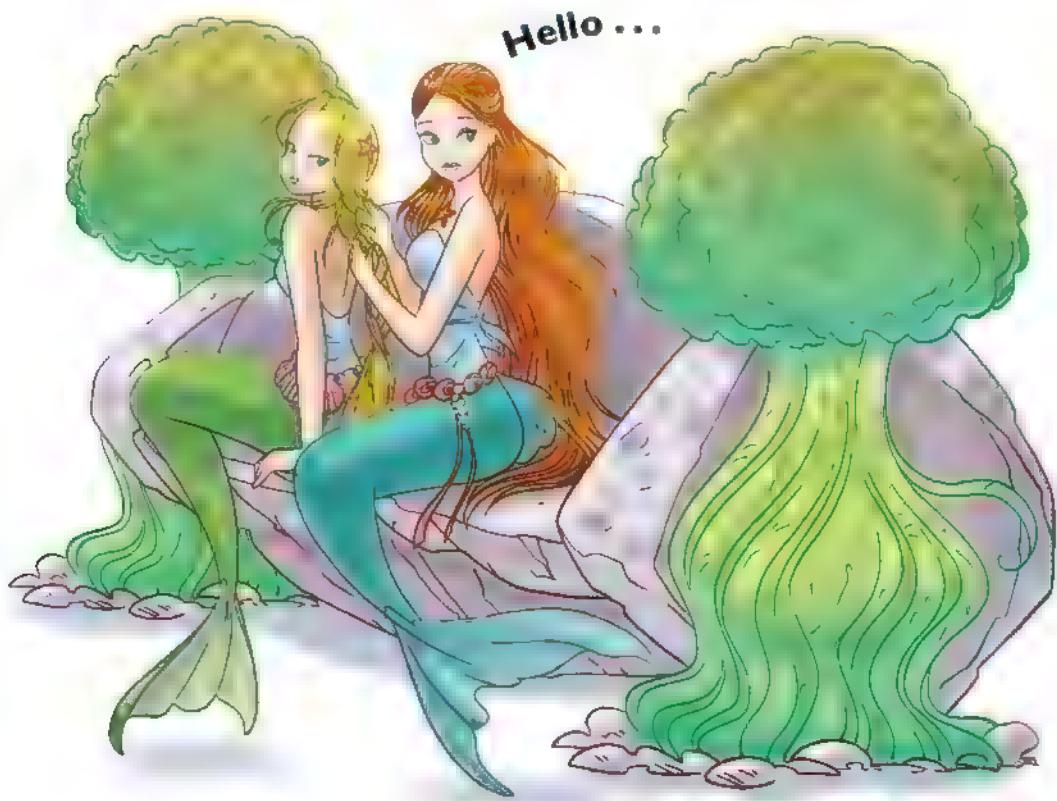


They swam up to two **beautiful siren**s sitting on a bench. Each had a fish tail instead of legs.

“Hello,” Will said.

“Hello,” replied the first siren, who was braiding her companion’s **long hair**.

She **STUDIED** the mice. Then the other siren spoke up. “What brings you to Sirens’ Bay?” she asked.





“We’re here to ask for your **help**, kind sirens,” said Paulina.

“We’re happy to help you, if we can,” replied the sirens together. Their voices sounded **light** and **musical**.

Paulina continued. “We know that you are the guardians of a very **precious object**: a string from the Sea Violin.”

The sirens looked at each other.

“Is that true?” Will asked.

“It’s true, but I’m afraid you should be talking to our queen, **Esmeralda**,” the blue-eyed siren informed him.

“Can you take us to her?” Nicky asked.

“**Gladly!**” said the siren, smiling.

The sirens led them through the village to a house that was **LARGER** and more decorated with **shells** than the others.

“Wait here, please,” one of them said, and



she went inside. She returned a moment later. “The **QUEEN** will see you,” she said.

Will, Nicky, Colette, and Paulina entered a large, circular room. Queen Esmeralda sat in the center, on a **THRONE** shaped like a seashell. She was **stunningly beautiful**, with long, blonde hair that cascaded down her back in a loose braid.

“Welcome,” she greeted them **sweetly** with a wide smile. “Let us talk about the reason you’re here. I’m told you desire the string of the **Sea Violin**.”

“We are trying to **SAVE** Aquamarina,” Will said.

The queen nodded. Then she opened her mouth and began to sing.

“You strangers may be sweet and kind,  
But what is it you hope to find?  
The Sea Violin is our greatest treasure.”





Its worth is something none can measure.



How dare you ask us for this string?



Your request is far beyond daring.”



Luckily, our friends remembered to **cover their ears** before Esmeralda started singing. They didn't remove their  until they saw the queen was silent.

“I see that you don't like my song,” Esmeralda said. “I was just trying to **explain** that I cannot give the string to strangers. It is too valuable.”

“But we are on a **MISSION** from Queen Anemone,” Nicky explained.

Esmeralda smiled. “Ah, I see. Then perhaps we can make a **TRADE**.”

“What kind of trade?” Colette asked.

Esmeralda pointed at Will. “**I WANT HIM.**”

“He is not an object to trade!” Paulina protested.



“Relax,” said the queen. “I don’t want to **keep** him. I just want to **dance** with him. Then you may have the string.”

“May we talk among ourselves about it?” Will asked, and the queen nodded.

Our friends left the room **huddled** together.

“We can’t accept. It’s a **TRAP**,” Paulina whispered.

“Exactly,” said Colette. “If you’re dancing with Esmeralda, you won’t be able to **Cover your ears** if she sings.”

“You can use these!” Nicky said, pulling some **earplugs** from the pocket of her wet suit. “I always keep them with me when I go underwater.”

“Nicky, that’s **perfect!**” Paulina said.

Will put in the **EARPLUGS**. “I can read lips, so Esmeralda won’t realize I can’t hear her if she speaks to me.”



They returned to the throne room. “We **accept** your terms, Esmeralda. I will **dance** with you for one song.”

Esmeralda swam toward Will. “Good. You’ve made the right choice.”

She clapped her hands, and **music** filled the room. Will took her in his arms and they began to dance.

Suddenly, Esmeralda frowned.

“You’ve **tricked** me!” she cried. She twirled her finger in the water and Will’s earplugs magically **floated** out.

“That wasn’t part of our deal,” the queen said angrily.

“You asked for a dance, and that’s what you got,” Will replied.

“**NEW RULES!**” cried Esmeralda. “No earplugs, or you won’t get the string.”

Will knew that the queen might **imprison**



## BEWARE THE SIRENS' TRICKS!

him. But he also knew that he had to **SAVE** Aquamarina.

“I’ll do it,” he agreed.

“**WILL, NO!**” Paulina yelled.

Will and Esmeralda danced again, and she placed her mouth close to Will’s ear and sang.

Will felt himself **falling** under the queen’s spell. Then he spotted Paulina **TEARFULLY** watching. He locked eyes with her. His mind suddenly felt **CLEAR!**

The music stopped. Esmeralda was **amazed** that Will had not fallen under her spell.

“Have it, then!” she said crossly. “**The string is yours!**”





# COLOSSUS, WHALE OF THE DEEP

Will took the string from Queen Esmeralda and he, Nicky, Paulina, and Colette *quickly* swam away from Sirens' Bay.

"There is no time to rest," Will said. "Now we've got to find **COLOSSUS**, Whale of the Deep."

"That was a close one!" Colette remarked as they swam. "When Esmeralda took out your earplugs, I thought it was **ALL OVER.**"

"I still don't understand how you didn't fall under her spell," Nicky added.

"I'm not sure, either," Will said. Then he *smiled* at Paulina. "But somehow I found the strength to resist her *song*."



“So, how do we find Colossus?” Nicky asked.

“And how do we get the string from her **belly**?” Colette added.

“Suddenly, the sirens don’t seem all that **SCARY**,” said Paulina.

Will looked at the map. “If we keep **swimming** this way, we should run into Colossus,” he said, motioning with his paw.

The mouselets followed Will. Soon they came to an **enormous shadow** that blocked the sunlight coming through the water. They looked up to see the underbelly of the **GIANT WHALE!**

“Colossus!” Nicky cried.

But before they could say a word to her, a **strong current** picked them up. It carried them right into Colossus’s huge **open mouth!**



Heeeeelp!

Whoa!

Take my paw!



“**HEEEEEELP!**” they shouted as they were pulled down into the whale’s mouth.

Nicky got to her feet. “It’s **SQUISHY** in here,” she said. “Kind of like a **SPONGY** cave.”

Will activated the flashlight on his wrist computer. “Is everyone all right?”

“I think so,” said Paulina. “Just **shaken up.**”

“At least we don’t have to worry how we’re going to get **inSide** the whale!” Colette joked.

The others turned on their **FLASHLIGHTS**, too.

“I think that’s the whale’s **throat,**” Colette said. “See that thing hanging down?”

“It’s called a uvula,” said Nicky. “But what’s that dangling from it?”

“It’s the violin string!” Paulina cried.

Will studied it. “We can’t reach it.”

“What if we **CLIMB** on one another’s



shoulders?" Nicky suggested.

"We need to be **careful**," Will warned. "We don't want the whale to **cough** us up before we get the string."

"Okay, let's do this!" Colette said. "I'll get on Nicky's shoulders. Then Will and Paulina, you **hoist** us up!"

They quickly got to work. Colette **SWAYED** back and forth a little as she tried to grab the string. Finally, her paw got a **grip** on it.

"Got it!" she cried, pulling it off the uvula.

Suddenly, Colossus had a gigantic sneeze!

**Aaaaaachoooo!**

The mice tumbled out of the great beast's mouth. They ended up on the whale's back as she began to rise to the surface.

For the first time since their **adventure** began, they were above the water. Colossus



swam off, leaving our friends bouncing on top of the **churning** waves.

“Well, we’ve got the strings,” Colette said. “But what do we do now?”

“**Look!**” cried Paulina, pointing.

A group of giant **GREEN SEA TURTLES** was swimming toward them. On each turtle sat a beautiful ocean fairy!

“We are the **Fairies of the Warm Sea**. We are here to help you,” said a fairy with green hair. “Climb on!”

Will, Nicky, Colette, and Paulina each climbed on top of a sea turtle, **helped** by one of the fairies.

“Thank you so much!” said Colette.

“How did you find us?” asked Will.

“This is our sea,” said the fairy. “We watch over the creatures who live here, and help those we find who are in **trouble**. Can we



take you somewhere?"

"The ~~SECRET~~ ~~SECRET~~, please," Will said.

The fairy smiled. "Very well. Hold on tight!" She directed the sea turtles **AWAY** from Colossus and toward the home of the Cobalt Hermit Crab.

Our mission was almost complete!





# RETURN TO THE MOVING DUNE

After Pam, Violet, and I reached the Moving Dune, we **waited** for Will and the others in front of the Seashell Palace.

Time passed, and our friends didn't arrive. Although I was **worried**, I kept reassuring Violet and Pam that everything was fine.

Finally, we saw something swimming toward us.

**“SEA TURTLES!”** Pam cried.

“Who’s that on their backs?” Violet asked.

As they got closer, we saw that they were carrying beautiful fairies — and **our friends!**

“You made it!” I cried. I was so happy to see them **safe and sound**.



They climbed down off the sea turtles and swam toward us.

**“Group hug!”** Pam shouted, and we all greeted one another happily.

“How did it go?” I asked.

“Great!” replied Colette. “Well, we did have a few **problems** . . .”

“But the **Fairies of the Warm Sea** came





to our rescue,” finished Nicky.

“Thank you for helping our friends,” I said to the fairies.

“It was a pleasure to help you,” replied a green-haired fairy.

“Did you find the strings?” Pam asked.

“**We have them both!**” Will answered, showing them to us.

“And how about you?” Paulina asked us.

“Yes!” replied Violet, holding up the two strings we had found.

“**Hooray!**” the Thea Sisters cheered.

“Now we just have to bring these inside and show the **COBALt HeRMiT CRAB** that we kept up our end of the bargain,” said Colette.

One of the Fairies of the Warm Sea spoke up. “We will wait for you here. Then we will take you to **Pink Pearl Castle**.”



“Thank you!” we cried.

We entered the Seashell Palace and found the Cobalt Hermit Crab **busy** with one of his piles of shells.

“Excuse me,” Will said politely.

The crab **JUMPED**, and he turned to look at us.

“Ah, it’s you,” he said.

“We brought you the **four strings** of the Sea Violin,” Will said, showing him. “And





## RETURN TO THE moving DUNE

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now we would like the instrument, please.”

The hermit crab’s eyes **bulged** with surprise. He fetched the Sea Violin from the mother-of-pearl trunk. Then he handed it to Will.

“Here it is,” he said. “Now go, before I **CHANGE MY MIND.**”

“Thank you for respecting our agreement,” I said.

“It was **foolish** of me!” the crab snapped.





“For when that violin plays, it will bring me great **unhappiness**.”

“What do you mean?” Paulina asked.

But the hermit crab just turned his back to us and **STARED** at his seashells.

“We should go,” Will said, motioning to us.

“I feel **sorry** for him,” said Paulina as we left the palace. “He seems **very sad** about something.”

“Yes, and his last comment was **very mysterious**,” Colette said.

“I agree,” I said. “But we don’t have time to find out what’s bothering him, I’m afraid. We must save **Aquamarina**!”

Outside the palace, the fairies were waiting for us.

“Jump on the sea turtles,” a fairy told us. “We’ll soon be at the **Pink Pearl Castle**!”



# QUEEN ANEMONE'S MUSIC

We arrived at the Pink Pearl Castle, our hearts filled with **hope**. Soon we would give the Sea Violin back to Queen Anemone, and **Aquamarina** would be saved!

First we had to swim through the coral wall. But this time we passed through as guests, not prisoners, so we were in no danger from its **STINGING BRANCHES**.

“Traveling with fairies is much easier!” Pam commented.

Paulina touched her arm where it had been stung by the **coral** and smiled. Thanks to the **Fairies of the Deep**, it was fine!

The turtles stopped in front of the main entrance. We climbed off and **thanked**



them for their help.

“Thank you for **saving** our realm,” one of the fairies said.

Inside the castle, it was strangely quiet.

“I don’t see a single **fairy** anywhere,” Colette remarked as we walked down the long hallways lined with pink pearls.

Finally we came to Queen Anemone’s **THRONE ROOM**. All the fairies of the court were there, waiting for us, and the queen was seated on her throne.

“Come forward, please,” she said.

We walked past the rows of **fairies** and stopped





in front of Queen Anemone.

"I am so **happy** to see you again. We have been worried about you!" she said.

"It was a **difficult mission**," Will explained.  
"But we completed it."



Look!

It's them!

They're here!

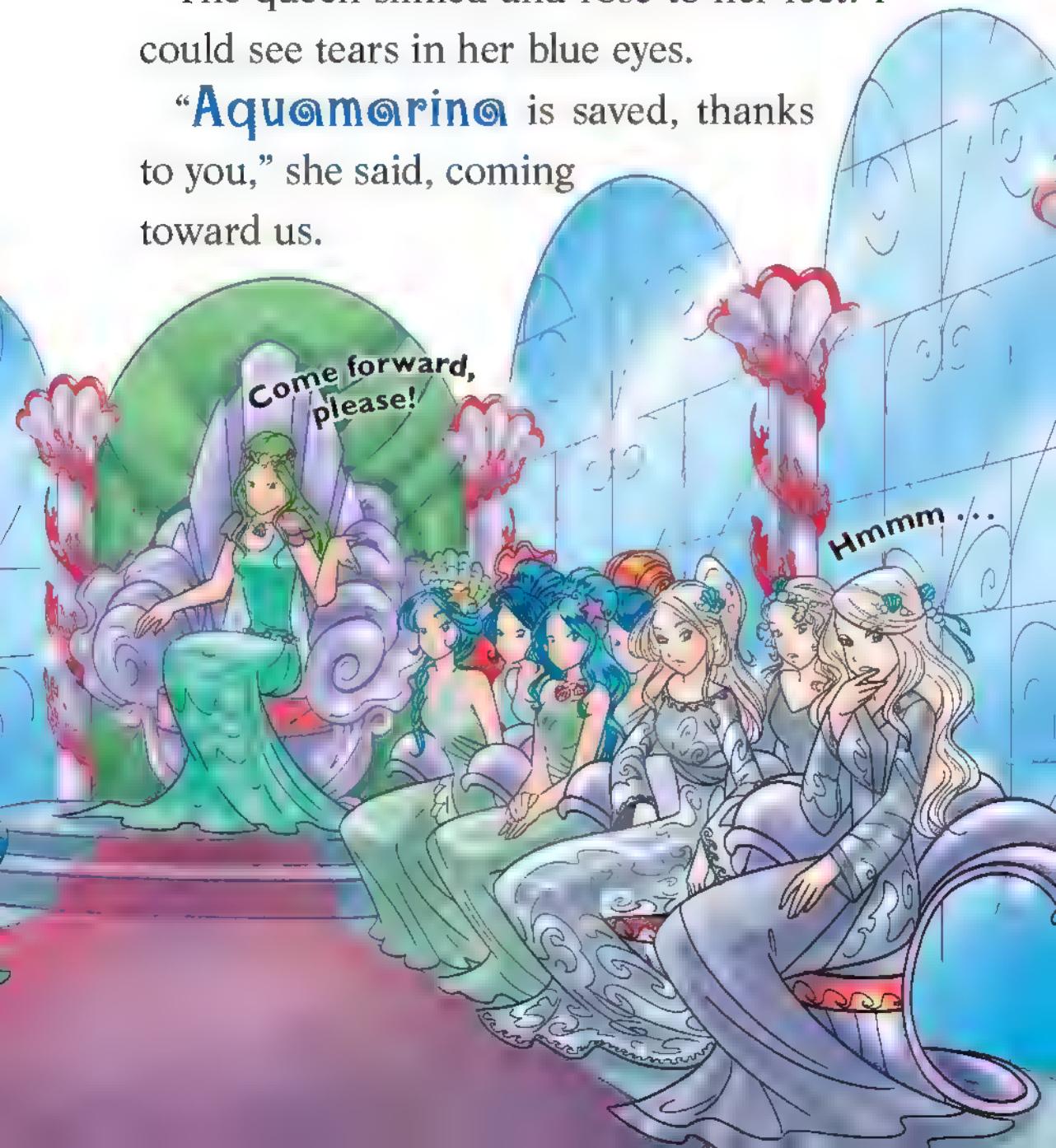
They did it!



He produced the **Sea Violin** and the four strings.

The queen smiled and rose to her feet. I could see tears in her blue eyes.

“**Aquamarina** is saved, thanks to you,” she said, coming toward us.





The fairies all **clapped**, smiling brightly. I looked happily at the Thea Sisters and Will. What a **joyful** moment!

Will handed the Sea Violin and its **strings** to the queen. She brought it back to her throne. Working **quickly** and **carefully**, she put the strings back on the instrument.

Then she looked at the violin and smiled.



She produced a long bow made of **red** coral, tucked the violin under her chin, and began to **PLAY**.

A **beautiful melody** filled the throne room. I had never heard anything like it. It was intense music, **sad** and **happy** at the same time.



Oooh ...

How wonderful!



As the music played, everything around us seemed to **glow** with new light and bright colors. The fairies' dresses shone in beautiful hues. Their hair became **shinier**, and their eyes brighter.

A **rainbow** appeared, arching across the throne room. It reflected off the mother-of-pearl walls and **ILLUMINATED** Queen Anemone's throne.

Then the queen stopped playing.

"Slowly, **COLOR** and **LIFE** will return to Aquamarina," she said. "And it is all thanks to you."

"We were happy to help, Your Majesty," Will said with a bow.

"However, I would like to know: Who is **responsible** for the theft?" she asked.

Before we could respond, we heard a **CLATTER** outside the throne room.



We all turned to look.

“It’s the **COBALT HERMIT CRAB!**”  
cried Pam.

“What is he doing here?” asked Colette.

We held our breath as the crab entered the room.





# THE MYSTERY OF THE CRAB

We all watched as the Cobalt Hermit Crab walked up to Queen Anemone's throne, his claws **clacking** against the polished floor.

"Your Majesty, I beseech you," he said.  
**"STOP PLAYING** the Sea Violin!"

The queen looked **puzzled**. "You know I cannot do that. This music keeps our realm alive."

"And it also **BREAKS MY HEART**," said the hermit crab. "When I hear it, I plummet into despair! That's why I stole the Sea Violin!"

The fairies gasped.  
"**Silence, please,**" the queen told them.  
"I know it was a terrible thing to do," the crab continued.



“Indeed it was,” Queen Anemone agreed. “I realized that when your friends chose to face the **DANGEROUS** quests I sent them on to find the four strings,” he said.

The queen nodded. “Our friends have **good hearts** and have saved Aquamarina.”

“And I have a **wicked** heart,” said the hermit crab. “Part of me hoped they would **FAIL**. I ask for your forgiveness.”





Queen Anemone turned to us.

“What happened when you brought this hermit crab the four strings? Did he try to **trick** you or go back on his bargain?” she asked.

“No, Your Majesty,” Will said. “He gave us the Sea Violin as he promised.”

“But he looked **very sad**,” Paulina added.

“I must go before you **play** the violin again,” said the Cobalt Hermit Crab.

“I forgive you,” said the queen, stepping up to him. To everyone’s surprise, she placed a **kiss** on the hermit crab’s head.

Suddenly, a vortex of water and fairy dust swirled through the room. When it subsided, the hermit crab was gone — and in his place was a **handsome prince!**

Queen Anemone stared into the eyes of the prince. **TEARS** ran down her cheeks.



Ooh ...

Nautilus!

I have returned!



“Nautilus! Is it really you?” she cried with joy.

**Prince Nautilus** held his arms out in front of him and stared at them in wonder. He touched his face. “I don’t know how it’s possible, but yes, **my love**, it really is me!”

Then he hugged her tightly.

**“Hooray for Prince Nautilus and Queen Anemone!”** the fairies rejoiced.

“What happened to you?” the queen asked Nautilus. “Where have you been all this time?”



“It is a **long** and **STRANGE** story,” Prince Nautilus said, and we all listened intently as he told his tale.

“Right after we became engaged, I



had reason to travel across the Infinite Abyss," he began. "I know how **DANGEROUS** that place can be, but I felt fearless. I was halfway across when I felt a **DARK FORCE** coming from the deep."

I saw Violet **SHUDDER**. She remembered that dark pull very well.

"Without thinking, I looked down," the prince continued. "I was sucked into the abyss. A kind fish helped me return to the surface. But by then it was **FOOLISH**."

By now we were starting to understand what had happened.

"I fell victim to the **evil magic** of the abyss. I was transformed into the Cobalt Hermit Crab!" the prince explained.

**"THAT'S TERRIBLE!"** the queen cried.

"After I **transformed**, I lost my memory," Prince Nautilus continued. "I was adrift and



alone. And every night, when you played the **music** of the Sea Violin, I felt **terribly sad**. I didn't understand why, but now I know it was because my **BROKEN HEART** missed you so much. I stole the Sea Violin because I couldn't bear the sadness."

"Oh, Nautilus, if only I had known it was you!" Queen Anemone cried.

Nautilus nodded to us. "These **good strangers** touched something in me. I did not want to see Aquamarina disappear. And then when I came here . . ."

"Our **love** broke the curse," the queen finished.

"Now that I've found you again, I'll never leave," he said, getting down on one knee. "Will you still be my wife?"

"**YES!**" she replied, and everyone cheered.



# A FAIRY-TALE WEDDING

“What a **happy ending** to this adventure!” said Violet. “Not only is Aquamarina saved, but the queen has found her **lost love**.”

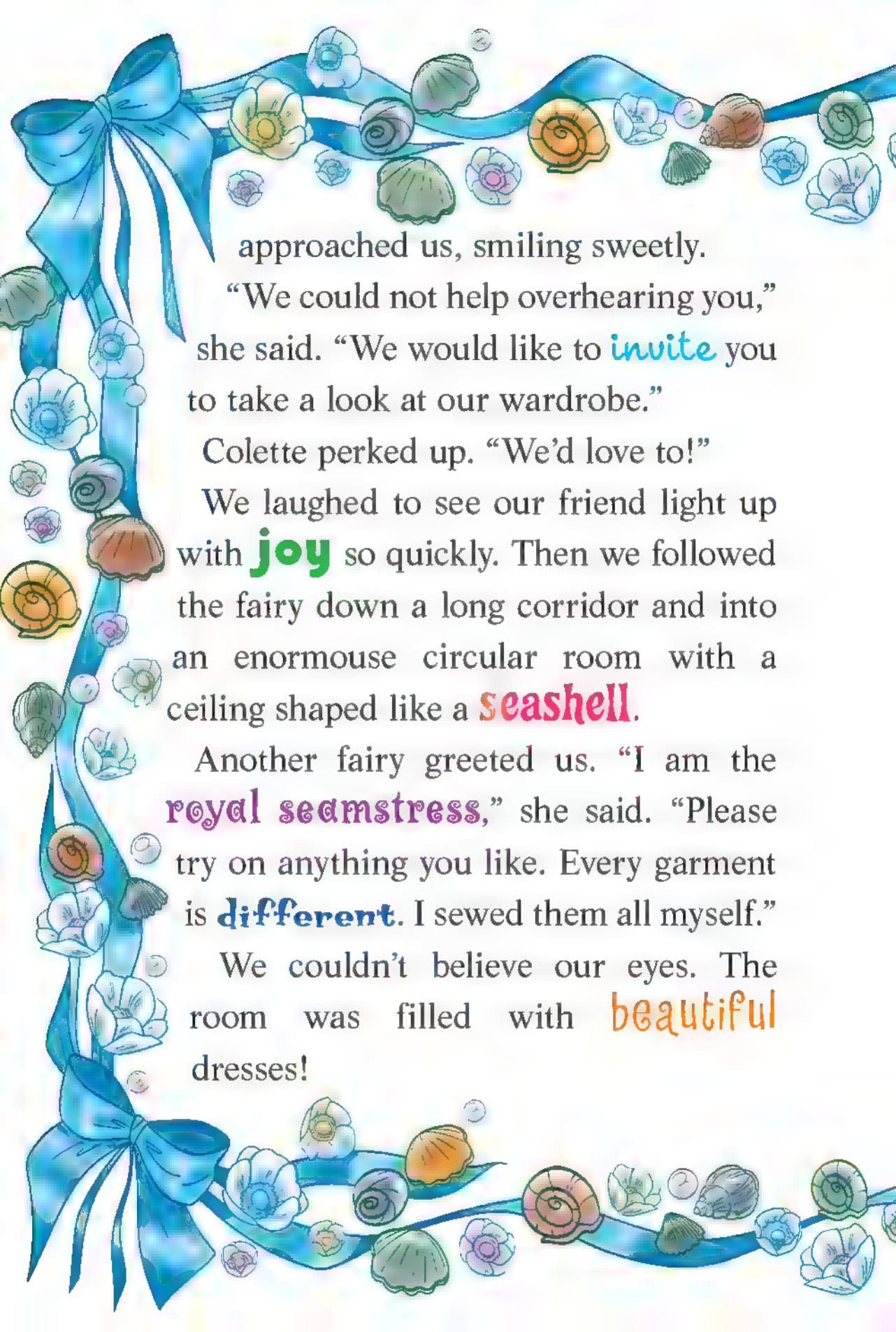
“And we’re invited to the **WEDDING**,” said Pam. “I’m sure there’ll be a great feast.”

Colette was the only Thea Sister frowning. “I’m glad we’re invited, but we can’t wear these **wet suits** to a royal wedding,” she said.

“What’s wrong with them?” asked Will. “They’re fine for a mission, but this is a **SPECIAL EVENT!**” Colette replied.

“I wonder if the **fairies** would mind lending us some clothes?” Paulina asked.

One of the **Fairies of the Deep**



approached us, smiling sweetly.

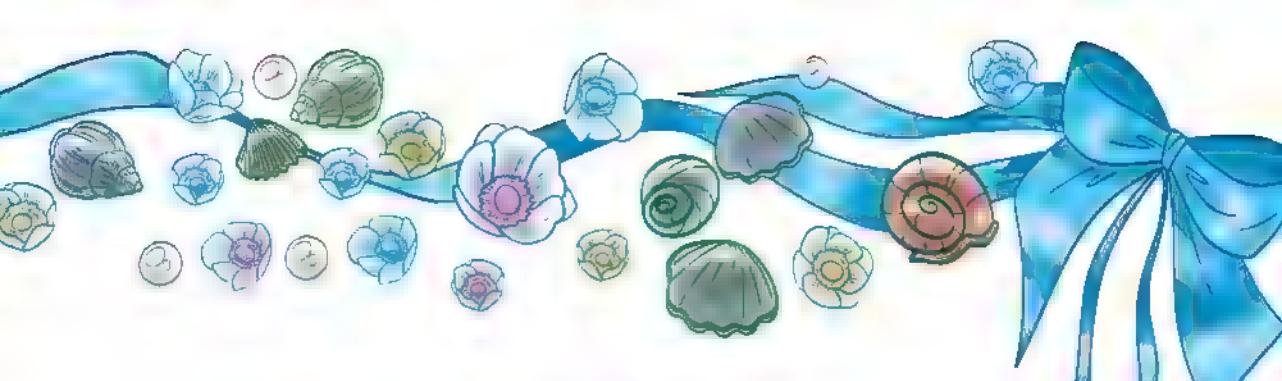
“We could not help overhearing you,” she said. “We would like to **invite** you to take a look at our wardrobe.”

Colette perked up. “We’d love to!”

We laughed to see our friend light up with **joy** so quickly. Then we followed the fairy down a long corridor and into an enormous circular room with a ceiling shaped like a **seashell**.

Another fairy greeted us. “I am the **royal seamstress**,” she said. “Please try on anything you like. Every garment is **different**. I sewed them all myself.”

We couldn’t believe our eyes. The room was filled with **beautiful** dresses!



“This fabric is **LIGHTER** than silk,”  
Colette marveled, touching a **sky-blue** dress.

“And look at the pearls on this **TELEST** gown,” said Pam.

“I found the prettiest **GREEN**





slippers to go with this green gown!" said Nicky.

It was difficult to **decide** what to wear, but in the end, the fairies helped us each choose the **perfect** gown.

"I feel like a real princess," Violet said, **twirling** around in a long purple dress embroidered with stars.

"I know what you mean," agreed Paulina





as she clipped a **blue star** into her hair.

“It’s like we’re all part of the fairy tale!”

“You look **fabumouse**, Thea!” Pam said.

I smiled. “**Thank you.**” I did feel very **elegant** in my blue silk gown.

The Fairies of the Deep even did our **hair** for us! Thanks to them, we all looked **wonderful** when it came time for the wedding. The fairies led us through the castle





to the Grand Ballroom, which was filled with fairies in **gorgeous** gowns. Will came over, wearing a pearl-gray suit.

“You all look **GREAT!**” he told us.

“I see you’ve cleaned up, too,” I said.

“Now do you understand why we couldn’t wear our **wet suits** here?” Colette asked, motioning to the other wedding guests.

Suddenly, a blaring **TRUMPET** filled the room. Everyone stopped talking and turned to the main door.

Queen Anemone walked in. She looked stunning, wearing a **pale pink** gown decorated with seashells and pearls. A tiara **sparkled** on top of her head.

“What a dress!” said Colette.

Then Nautilus stepped in, wearing a suit with a **mother-of-pearl** sheen. He took Anemone’s hand and they walked through



the ballroom together.

“They look so **happy**!” Violet said.

The couple stopped in front of a large **seashell**.

“That shell is filled with **sand** from all over the realm,” a nearby fairy explained.

A fairy with a bushy **WHITE BEARD** and a fish tail officiated the ceremony. When he tapped his scepter on the ground, Anemone and Nautilus each took a **HANDFUL** of sand. Then they clasped hands, combining the sand, and shared a kiss.

A cheer went up from the crowd, and fairies started blowing **BUBBLES** that floated all over the ballroom.

“**Hooray for Queen Anemone and Prince Nautilus!**” everyone cheered.

Then the celebration began.

I pronounce you  
husband and wife!

We are united

Forever!



How romantic ...

Hooray for the newlyweds!



# THE GOLDEN SEA HORSES

When the ceremony was over, the wedding **celebration** began. The musicians struck up a sweet, romantic tune and the crowd parted for Anemone and Nautilus. It was time for the **first dance**!

The queen and her prince gazed into each other's eyes as they **twirled** around.

"They're so **graceful**, it's like they're floating," Colette remarked.

"All you have to do is look into their eyes to see how in **love** they are," added Violet.

It was a beautiful sight. Above the dancers, **golden** garlands hung from the ceiling, along with **ribbons** adorned with shells and sea flowers.



The first **SONG** ended, and the musicians struck up another tune. Fairy couples joined Anemone and Nautilus on the dance floor.

Will turned to Paulina. “**May I have this dance?**” he asked, holding out his paw.

“**Of course!**” Paulina replied. She put her paw in his, and he led her out onto the dance floor.

The other Thea Sisters and I watched as Will and Paulina twirled across the Grand Ballroom.

“They look so **sweet**,” Colette said.

“Speaking of sweets,” said Pam. “When





do we get to eat some **WEDDING CAKE?**"  
We all **laughed**.

"I don't know if it's time for cake yet, but there's a pretty **nice** spread over there," Nicky said, nodding toward the wall.

Long tables were **PILEO** with delicious-looking food. We walked over to try some.

"**They're all desserts!**" Pam cried happily.

Each one we tried was more delicious than the next. Almond **cockies** with coral-colored icing. Pastries shaped like **seashells**. Tarts with **jewel**-colored fruit.

Then the musicians stopped playing, and two fairies came in carrying the **WEDDING CAKE**. It had three tiers, with turquoise icing and sugar decorations shaped like **coral**, **starfish**, and **seashells**.

Queen Anemone and Prince Nautilus



walked up to the cake, hand in hand, and cut the first slice.

The room erupted in **CHEERS** for the newlyweds. The music started up again and they danced away while fairies cut the rest of the cake.

“This is the **BEST WEDDING** ever!”





said Pam, taking a bite of her piece.

The **celebration** continued with more dancing, food, and laughter.

Queen Anemone and Prince Nautilus approached us. They both looked so happy.

**“Thank you** all for taking part in this celebration,” the queen said.

“I must thank you as well,” said Nautilus. “Without you I would not have found my **true love** again. And I would still be a hermit crab!”

“Even as a **Hermit Crab**, you came to the palace and asked for forgiveness,” I reminded him. “Your **good heart** won the day, in the end.”

Nautilus smiled. “That is kind of you,” he said, and then he raised his glass. “May **peace** and **love** rule this world forever!”

We all cheered.



“And now I am sorry to say that we must leave,” Will said.

Our time in **Aquamarina** had flown by!  
“We understand,” said Queen Anemone.  
“You will be our **honored guests** any time you return.”

“Thank you, Your Majesty,” I said.  
“You are welcome,” said the queen. “The **PASSAGE** between Aquamarina and your





world is still open. But you must go quickly. The **Golden Sea Horses** will take you to the Bridge of Worlds.”



We all said **farewell** and left to change back into our wet suits. Fairy attendants brought us to the **Golden Sea Horses**.

“They’re such **GORGEOUS** creatures!” Nicky exclaimed.

“It’s a shame we have to leave,” Violet said with a sigh. “Now that the **Music of the Sea** is playing again, this world has become even more beautiful.”

She was right. As the sea horses took us



away from the palace, we passed many fish. Their **bright colors** had returned.

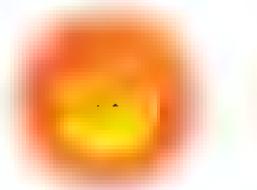
The Golden Sea Horses ***SWIFTLY*** carried us across the realm. It wasn't long before we saw a large **STONE BRIDGE** arching up from the ocean floor and rising above the water's surface.

We climbed off the sea horses and thanked them for the ride.

"I'll **MISS** this place," Colette said sadly. "We all will," I agreed. "But we'll always keep the memories we made here in our **hearts**."

"Come on!" Will said, climbing up the steps of the **BRIDGE**. "There should be an agent waiting for us!"

And so with one last **LOOK** back, we left Aquamarina.



# THE MUSIC OF THE SEA

As we emerged into the **sunlight**, we saw a helicopter hovering above us.

“As punctual as ever!” said Will, pleased.

The helicopter **silently** sank down toward us. A rope ladder **unfurled** and we all climbed aboard.

Then the helicopter **flew** back up into the sky and headed toward the horizon. When we looked down, the bridge had disappeared beneath the **waves**. The passage to the world of Aquamarina had closed.

“We’ll drop you off at Mouseford Academy, but I must continue directly to the **SEVEN ROSES UNIT**,” Will explained. “I wish I could stay and visit, but I’m anxious to get



back and look at the data we collected.”

“We understand,” I said. “And if you need any **help**, you know where to find us.”

“Thanks, Thea,” he said. “And I also want to compliment you all. You demonstrated **courage** and **skill** on this risky mission. But I knew you would!”

“Thanks, Will!” the Thea Sisters replied.

By now we could see Whale Island on the



horizon. The sky was turning **RED** as the sun set behind the academy.

The helicopter landed. We said good-bye to Will and jumped down to the ground, and the helicopter quickly flew off.

“Should we go to the **beach** and enjoy this **sunset**?” I asked the Thea Sisters.

“Yes!” they replied.

So we took a walk down to the **sandy** beach and gazed out at the **peaceful** ocean. All of our thoughts immediately returned to Aquamarina.

“Can you hear the waves lapping against the shore?” Violet asked. “It reminds me of the **Music of the Sea!**”

We listened to the music of the waves as the **SUN** disappeared below the horizon and into the sea.

“I can almost imagine the sun setting on

So peaceful...

Can you hear it?

**Pink Pearl Castle,**" said Colette.

"Helping **Aquamarina** was such a fun mission," Nicky remarked.

"You said it!" Pam agreed.

Violet nodded. "I'm already looking forward to our **next adventure!**"

Paulina **smiled**. "If I know Will Mystery, we won't have to wait very long for it!"



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Don't miss  
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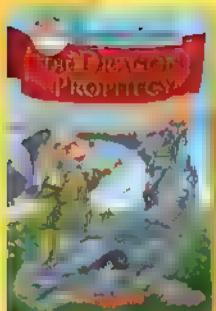
**THE KINGDOM  
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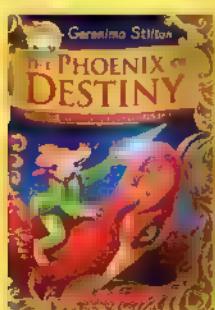
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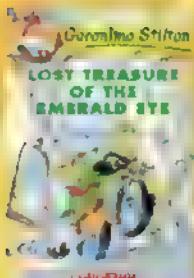
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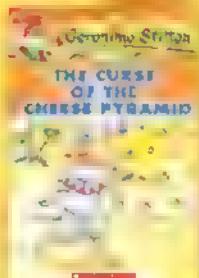
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#3 Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House



#4 I'm Too Fond of My Fur!



#5 Four Mice Deep in the Jungle



#6 Paws Off, Cheddarface!



#7 Red Pizzas for a Blue Count



#8 Attack of the Bandit Cats



#9 A Fabumouse Vacation for Geronimo



#10 All Because of a Cup of Coffee



#11 It's Halloween, Yee 'Fraidy Mouse!



#12 Merry Christmas, Geronimo!



#13 The Phantom of the Subway



#14 The Temple of the Ruby of Fire



#15 The Mona Mousa Code



#16 A Cheese-Colored Camper



#17 Watch Your Whiskers, Stilton!



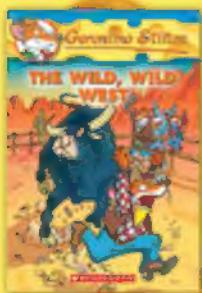
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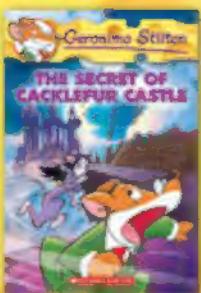
#19 My Name Is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton



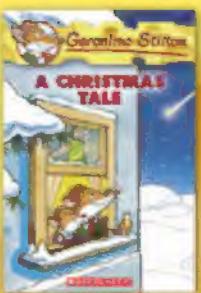
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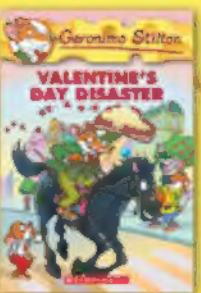
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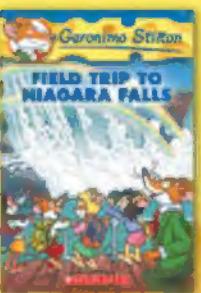
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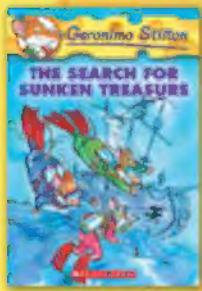
A Christmas Tale



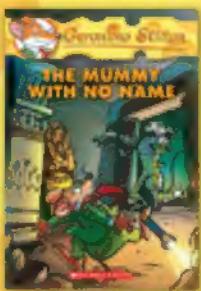
#23 Valentine's Day Disaster



#24 Field Trip to Niagara Falls



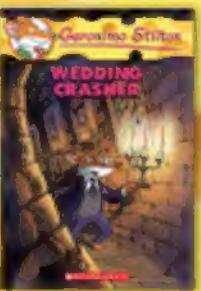
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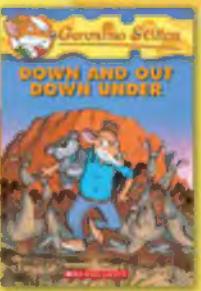
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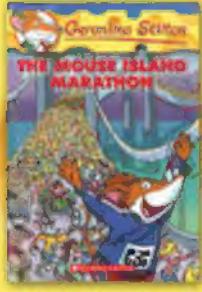
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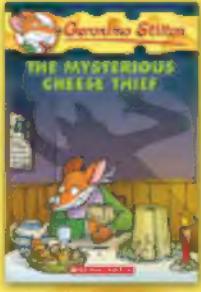
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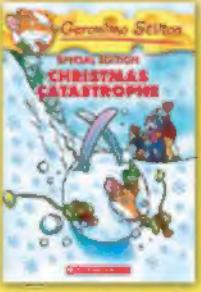
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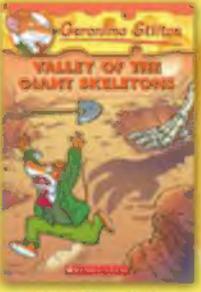
#30 The Mouse Island Marathon



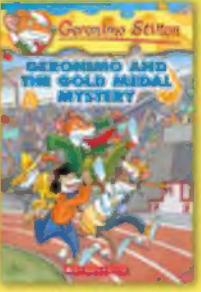
#31 The Mysterious Cheese Thief



Christmas Catastrophe



#32 Valley of the Giant Skeletons



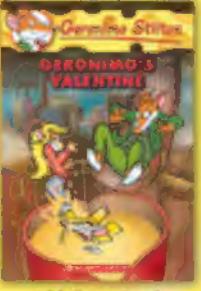
#33 Geronimo and the Gold Medal Mystery



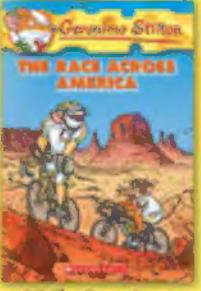
#34 Geronimo Stilton, Secret Agent



#35 A Very Merry Christmas



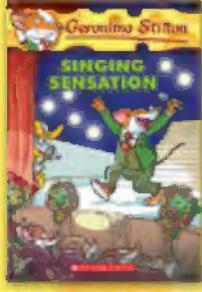
#36 Geronimo's Valentine



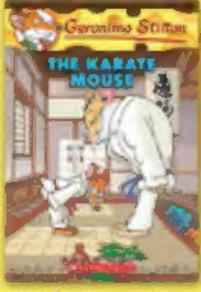
#37 The Race Across America



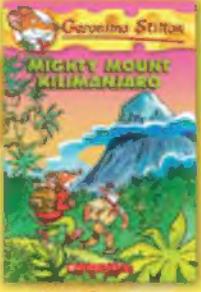
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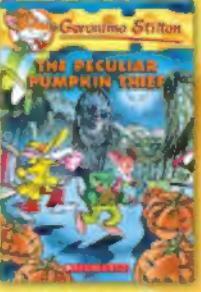
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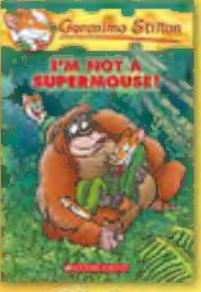
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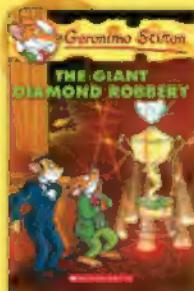
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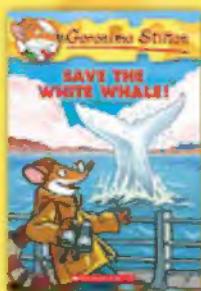
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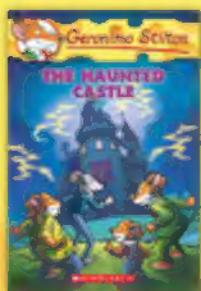
#43 I'm Not a Supermouse!



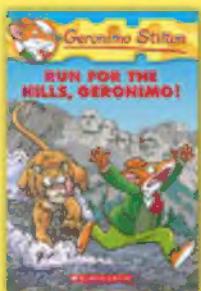
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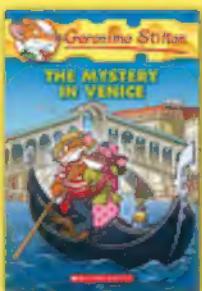
#45 Save the White Whale!



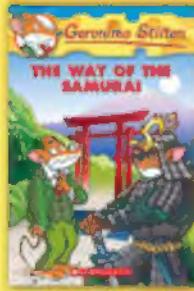
#46 The Haunted Castle



#47 Run for the Hills, Geronimo!



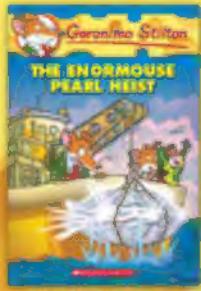
#48 The Mystery in Venice



#49 The Way of the Samurai



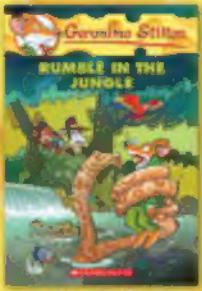
#50 This Hotel is Haunted!



#51 The Enormous Pearl Heist



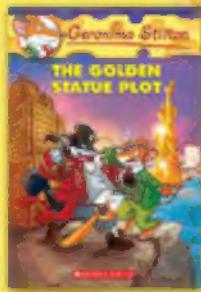
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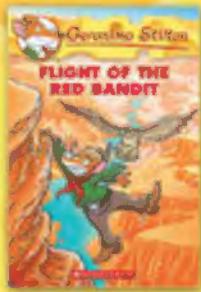
#53 Rumble in the Jungle



#54 Get into Gear, Stilton!



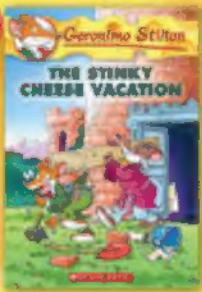
#55 The Golden Statue Plot



#56 Flight of the Red Bandit



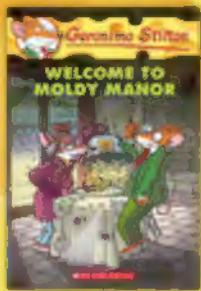
The Hunt for the Golden Book



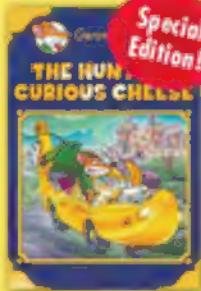
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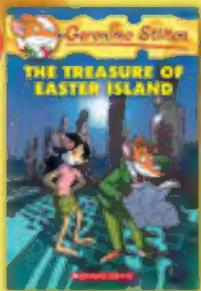
#58 The Super Chef Contest



#59 Welcome to Moldy Manor



The Hunt for the Curious Cheese



#60 The Treasure of Easter Island



#61 Mouse House Hunter



#62 Mouse Overboard!



The Hunt for the Secret Papyrus



#63 The Cheese Experiment



#64 Magical Mission



# Where is the music of the sea?

Thea Stilton and the Thea Sisters are needed to help Aquamarina, the magical land of the ocean! The enchanted Music of the Sea has stopped playing, and no one knows why. If it doesn't return soon, the realm will perish!

The mouselets and their friend Will Mystery travel to the underwater world to find the magical music. On their mission, they swim through dangerous waters, encounter strange and fantastical creatures, and even reveal an ancient mystery. It's a mousetastic aquatic adventure!

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